

# The Prophets

Edward Chauncey Baldwin



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# THE PROPHETS



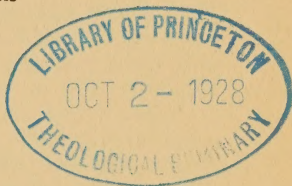


# THE PROPHETS

BY

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## PREFACE

In this little volume the writer makes no claim to original scholarship. Nor does he even claim to have made any important contribution to the literature of the subject. Probably any intelligent person with the necessary time at his disposal could find in books already in print all that the volume contains—and much more. Unfortunately few people have either the time or the library facilities to make such a course of reading possible. To such readers this condensation and popularization of the scholarly work of other men will, it is hoped, prove useful.

It is especially planned, not so much for the general reader however, as for the use of college classes in Biblical literature. Indeed it is, in a form somewhat condensed, the course of study in the work of the Hebrew prophets which the author has worked out for his own use in his university teaching. Any merit it may possess therefore is the result of its having been found practically suited to the comprehension of university students, who approach the subject, not only without a background of Semitic scholarship, but with only slight previous acquaintance with the Bible itself.

It is in the hope of enlarging somewhat the acquaintance both of the general reader and of the college student with the Bible, and particularly with the prophets, that this volume has been prepared. If it serves in any degree to lessen the neglect into which the Bible has fallen in these days of changing religious faith, the writer's purpose will have been achieved.

Urbana, Illinois

June 1927.





TO  
MABEL MERRILL BALDWIN



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## CHAPTER I

### THE NEW BIBLE

From scheme and creed the light goes out,  
The saintly fact survives;  
The Blessed Master none can doubt  
Revealed in holy lives.

WHITTIER, *The Friend's Burial.*

THIS statement is far truer today than it was a half century ago when Whittier wrote it. The light is going out of scheme and creed. Theological opinions that fifty years ago seemed as unchangeable as the everlasting hills are now being thrown ruthlessly aside because they are no longer tenable by a living faith. Yet it is only what might be called the excess baggage of religion that is being cast away. Theology, which is after all only men's thought about religion and not the thing itself, may, and indeed must, change in the process of adjustment to changing needs; but religion itself—what has been called “the life of God in the soul of man”—goes on.

To do Thy will is more than praise,  
As words are less than deeds,  
And simple trust can find Thy ways  
We miss with chart of creeds.

The lamentable truth must be recognized, however, that in this present period of transition, when the old theology is being discredited, and the new not yet formulated, the Bible on which both the old and the new theology must ultimately rest, is

in danger of becoming a neglected if not a forgotten book. For such neglect and oblivion the principal reason is that people are by no means agreed on how to regard it.

Four estimates of the Bible are clearly distinguishable. There is first that of the group known as the fundamentalists, who accept either without reservation, or with slight modifications, the so-called doctrine of plenary inspiration. According to this theory the Biblical writers were God's secretaries, inspired penmen, who had no more to do with the message they transcribed than has the stenographer with the contents of the business letter dictated by her employer. "Holy men of old," so said the New England Catechism, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." To the fundamentalist the Bible is literally the word of God, and its words are the words of God. Consequently, to him the Bible has become a collection of texts that can be used to determine a course of action, or cited as authority for a decision already made, or quoted in controversy to silence an adversary.

Often such citations of Scripture texts regardless of their source are inconclusive. In this connection I recall hearing some years ago in Virginia, a sermon by a colored preacher in which he quoted in support of his contention that Solomon had negro blood in his veins, the verse from one of the love lyrics of Canticles:

I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,  
As the tents of Kedar,  
As the curtains of Solomon.

The clergyman seemed quite oblivious to the fact that one cannot prove anything by a love song. As reasonably might he have asserted on the authority

of Burns' lyric, "My luve is like a red, red rose," that Burns had fallen in love with an American Indian. Equally malapropos was the reference of a certain judge in New York City, who said in a legal decision: "We have the highest possible authority for saying 'Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.'" The next day one of the New York papers in an exultant, and as it seemed to many devout people, irreverent editorial, announced that the quotation was taken from one of Satan's speeches in Job. "Now," the editorial concluded, "we know at last who is regarded as the 'highest possible authority' by the legalists of the Empire State."

Naturally, with a view of inspiration that makes him regard as of equal divine authority every statement in the Bible, the "fundamentalist" believes that the Bible is always right and science always wrong.

Though the fundamentalist position has a long tradition behind it, and though it undoubtedly represents the attitude of a majority of Christian people today, it is nevertheless a difficult one to maintain in the face of clearly demonstrated and obstinately stubborn facts. Take, for example, the basic article of the fundamentalist creed—the assertion that the Bible is the word of God, and its words, the words of God. In view of the fact that there are thousands of variations in the existing manuscripts, and that the original texts are lost, how are we to determine what were the authentic words dictated to "the holy men of old"? The very nature of the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was written discredits the theory of plenary inspiration. There were no vowels in the Hebrew written language. B-r-d might be bird or beard or bread or

board according to the context. Not till the eighth century A.D. did certain Jewish scholars invent a system of points which, placed above or below the words, supplied the vowels they thought belonged there. Often a slightly different vowel-pointing will give a wholly changed and sometimes a more probable meaning. Unless we assume that the medieval Jewish rabbis also "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," we can scarcely credit them with the infallibility which the belief of the fundamentalist implies. Moreover, the infallibility of the Scriptures in matters scientific has been repeatedly challenged by the demonstrated facts of science. That the sun and not the earth is the center of our universe has been a matter of common knowledge for three centuries, and the hoary antiquity of the earth in contrast to the mere span of six thousand years allowed by the Bible is no longer debatable.

Finally the fundamentalist faces serious difficulties in the attempt to reconcile his belief in plenary inspiration with the various self-contradictions of the Bible. There is the statement in one account of the Deluge that the animals went by two's into the ark, and in another that some of them went in by seven's; that the Deluge lasted forty days, and again that it continued one hundred and fifty days. In one of the historical books, we are told that God moved David to number Israel, and in another that Satan suggested it. Equally troublesome is the difficulty of the quotations from the Old Testament in the New. Sometimes they agree with the Hebrew text, sometimes with the Septuagint or Greek version, sometimes with neither. If the theory of verbal inspiration is to be championed successfully, the fundamentalist must find some way

to harmonize the self-contradictions and the verbal differences with the theory that both came originally from one infallible author, and were recorded by infallible penmen. In short, unless he can demonstrate that the acceptance of his Bible does not involve the sacrifice on the part of its readers of their common knowledge, and even of their common sense, he must expect ere long to see it relegated to the limbo of neglected books.

Realizing this necessity, a second group of Bible readers seek to rationalize their faith in the Bible as the word of God, by attempting to harmonize the Scripture statements with demonstrated scientific truth. In this attempt they substitute for the literalism of the fundamentalists a symbolic method of interpretation. Their method and its results are exemplified by their treatment of the time element in the creation story of the first chapters of Genesis. Here we are told that God created the world in six days, and that he rested on the seventh. Science on the other hand affirms that creation occupied millions of years, and is still unfinished. Worlds are still being formed from star dust as when "the morning stars sang together," for every day is a creative day with God. These two opposing views the harmonist seeks to reconcile by a symbolic explanation of the "days" of Genesis. The word "day" is not to be understood, they tell us, as meaning a period of twenty-four hours, but allegorically as representing a long period of time. Though we are not expressly told the length of these creative periods, we may by a simple mathematical calculation estimate them, for are we not informed by the inspired word that to God a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years? God's Sabbath rest that followed the work of creation has been,

they say, continuous ever since, having lasted through all the ages of recorded time.

So, by the simple process of multiplying by one thousand, the harmonist brings the language of Genesis into some degree of harmony with the conclusions of the modern science of geology. But in accepting the Genesis story, thus symbolically explained, he finds himself out of accord with the conception of God's relation with His world common to later Biblical writers. They, instead of thinking of God as apart from His world, believed that nature depended for the sustaining power of its life on Him who watches over the great things and the small—who guides the stars in their courses and provides the ravens their food, who "sends forth the springs into the valleys," and "causeth grass to grow for cattle and herbs for the service of man."

On the whole the inconsistencies of the harmonist's Bible are quite as troublesome as those of the fundamentalist's. These difficulties an allegorical interpretation do not remove. Consequently many former harmonists are now joining a third group of Bible readers who may be called the moralists. These latter affirm that the Bible has nothing to do with scientific truth but only with moral and spiritual truth. Their position as stated by an eminent churchman is that the Bible teaches, not how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven. This sounds like an entirely reasonable and defensible point of view. The trouble comes from the moralist's insistence that within its own restricted field, the moral realm, the Bible is equally authoritative throughout, that its moral judgments are always infallibly correct. As a matter of fact, the moral inconsistencies of the Bible are no less numerous than the historical contradictions, so that the moralist faces difficulties

no less perplexing than those of the fundamentalist or the harmonist. To be consistent with his creed, he must endorse the treachery of Jael in killing Sisera while he slept, an act that violated the primitive code of hospitality of even that barbarous age. He must reconcile as best he may Elijah's calling down fire from heaven to consume the officers of the law sent to arrest him (II Kings I) with Jesus's rebuke of his disciples for proposing to imitate him. Still more difficult to reconcile with Jesus's injunction to love one's enemies is Samuel's message in God's name to Saul commanding him to kill all the Amalekites "both men and women, infant and suckling," the prophet setting an example of thoroughness by hewing Agag, their king, "in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal" (I Sam. XV). Another prophet curses the children who taunt him for his baldness; and in answer to his prayer "two she-bears came forth out of the wood and tare forty and two children of them" (II Kings II). This repellent story seems scarcely consonant with the attitude toward children of a greater than Elisha who declared "whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe in me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea."

These examples of moral inconsistencies, together with dozens of others that might be cited, show that many of the ethical judgments recorded in the Bible, so far from being morally infallible, are themselves corrected by the more enlightened conscience of later Biblical writers. It is hard to see, therefore, how the moralist can justify his claim that in the moral realm the Scriptures throughout are equally infallible.



One group of Bible readers remains to be mentioned. It is a growing body composed of those who accept the conclusions of modern Biblical scholars, believing that by so doing they not only account for the inconsistencies that perplex the fundamentalist, the harmonist, and the moralist, but discover the real Bible.

They find it to be indeed what Saint Jerome in the fourth century called it, "a divine library." It consists of sixty-six books bound together into one volume. The collection is as varied as if we should put together Grimm's *Heroic Legends*, Knox's *History of the Reformation*, Bushnell's *Sermons*, Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, Bacon's *Essays*, Cowper's *Letters*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Webster's *Speeches*, Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell*, a hymn book, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, and Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Practically every kind of literary interest is represented—folklore, history, biography, essay, epistle, drama, allegory, oratory, fiction, dream literature, lyric poetry, and law, both civil and ecclesiastical.

Yet the Bible is far more than a splendid miscellany. With all its variety, it possesses a unity obvious and unmistakable. The whole collection is unified by the fact of its being a record of the religious development of a uniquely gifted race—a race endowed with a genius for understanding God and His relations with mankind. The Bible, the literature of Israel, is the record of successive attempts to find the right answers to four important questions: Who is God? What is man? What is the right relation between man and God? How is the right relation to be secured? Naturally, since these attempts covered about fourteen centuries of

religious thinking, the answers varied considerably in their religious value.

How much they varied may be exemplified by a brief summary of the progress of Hebrew thought in trying to formulate an answer to the first of the four questions: Who is God? Originally the Hebrews were polytheists, believers in many gods. Traces of this primitive polytheism are distinctly traceable in the Old Testament. It is evident in the very first verse of the Bible, where the name of God (*elohim*) is plural in form, though singular in meaning. It is evident also in that strange story in the sixth chapter of Genesis, a story that would be recognized as an ancient myth if it were read anywhere but in the Bible, of the sons of God (sons of the *elohim*) falling in love with the daughters of men. "They took them wives," we are told, "of all that they chose," and became the fathers of the giants that "were in the earth in those days."

Out of this early belief in many gods, monotheism, a faith in the one God, developed when a tutelar or guardian deity, by name Yahveh, came to be regarded as the chief among the *elohim*. Other gods there still were, less powerful than he, and worshiped by "lesser breeds without the law"; but Yahveh was thenceforth to be supreme in Israel. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" So sang the poet who composed the ancient song of triumph set into the text of Exodus (Ex. XV:11). His supremacy over the deities of neighboring peoples was first completely established when through his favor Elijah overcame the prophets of Baal in the dramatic fire test on Mount Carmel (I Kings XVIII). This famous arbitration was carefully staged. All Israel was present, with Ahab and Jezebel, the king and queen. On one side were the

eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal; and on the other, the one prophet of Yahveh. On the altar the wood was laid, and the flesh of the slain bullock upon the wood. The people agreed to accept the god that would send the altar fire to consume the sacrifice. All day the priests of Baal called in vain upon their god. Finally at evening Elijah, after drenching the sacrifice and the wood with twelve jars of water, called upon Yahveh, who sent so hot a fire that it burned not only the sacrifice but the wet wood and the very stones of the altar. "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, the Lord; he is the God; the Yahveh, he is the God."

For a long time this national God, Yahveh, was thought of as a provincial God, a local deity confined to the land where his worshipers lived. So closely was the worship of Yahveh connected with the land that when Naaman, the Syrian, wished to worship the God of Israel at his home city, Damascus, he had to beg for two mule loads of the soil of Canaan so that he might make the deity feel at home in a foreign country (II Kings V). It was a great discovery that Jacob made when on a journey that took him outside of Canaan he dreamed that he saw God's angels in a district that he had thought of as outside God's jurisdiction. "Verily," he exclaimed, on awakening, "God was in this place, and I knew it not . . . and he called the name of that place Beth-el" (house of God).

Moreover this national God was considered to be the invincible leader of the armies of Israel. The nation's enemies were his enemies and their discomfiture was his triumph. This idea finds expression in the refrain of one of the most stirring of the Hebrew patriotic songs:

The Lord of Hosts is with us,  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Ps. XLVI: 7.

The term "Lord of hosts" (Yahveh Sabaoth) means that God was regarded as being, not only commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel, but the militant head of the heavenly hosts as well. As such, he is said to have once sent an angel who described himself as "a prince of Yahveh's host" to give Joshua expert military advice upon the conduct of the siege of Jericho, which apparently was not being carried on efficiently according to the principles of celestial strategy. So successful was this strategy that Jericho fell—literally fell flat—within a week.

Only gradually, and largely through the influence of the eighth-century prophets, did the conception of Yahveh as a local and national war god yield to a larger view of God as the ruler of the whole earth. The prophet Amos it was, who first taught that He was not the God of Israel alone, but that just as truly as He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, so also did He bring the Philistines from Crete, and the Syrians from the region of the Caspian Sea (Amos IX:7).

To a time much later than the eighth century belongs the conception of God as a universal spiritual presence from whom it is neither possible nor desirable to escape. In Psalm CXXXIX occurs this sublime expression of faith in the universal presence:

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?  
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:  
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there.

One of the effects of such an exaltation and spiritualization of the idea of God was to increase im-

measurably the distance between sinful man and Deity. Hence, to bridge this chasm there developed in Israel a belief in an elaborate hierarchy of angels—five orders of them—whose function was to act as intermediaries between man and his God.

Had the growth of the idea of God stopped there, we should have had a God adequately described by Milton in the lines:

... God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts.  
Who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve Him best.  
His state  
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;

Between such a regal divinity and the object of the modern Christians' worship there intervenes, however, Jesus's teaching of the divine fatherhood, which is from the Christian's point of view the completion and the crown of the long process of man's attempts to find God.

The result of the substitution of the literary and historical study of the Old Testament for the older textual method of approach has proved unfounded the fear, formerly shared by many, lest the work of Biblical scholars should be wholly or mainly destructive. On the contrary, nothing essential has been lost. Though some of the mystery has disappeared, that lack has been more than compensated by what has been gained. To those of us who have tried it the historical or literary method of study has meant the rediscovery of the Hebrew Scriptures. In the light that has been thrown upon them by the reverent study of modern Biblical scholars the prophets, for example, are seen no longer as vague and shadowy figures in a past distant and unreal, but are brought before us as Tissot, the French

painter, brings them before us in the garb and in the surroundings in which they lived. And their words, like their personalities, have become vital—alive with messages for today, messages which we in this age cannot afford to ignore.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HEBREW PROPHETS

IN view of the importance of the prophets, both for their own times and ours, it is imperative that one should clearly understand what was the prophetic function. Exactly who these sixteen men were, what they aspired for and did, what they were for their time and what they still are for ours, what portion of our common stock of ethical ideas we owe to them—these are questions about which the average man has only the vaguest ideas. Without having thought much about it, he supposes that prophecy was “history written beforehand,”<sup>1</sup> and that the prophet’s special duty and significance consisted in foretelling the coming of Christ. Such a supposition, it seems hardly necessary to point out, is totally unjust both to the character and to the importance of Israelitish prophecy. Prediction was indeed a part of the prophetic work, but it was by no means exclusively the prophetic function.

Prophecy was occupied with the destinies of the kingdom of God, sometimes even the far-distant consummation and glory of the kingdom. But,

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<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr’s definition of the word prophet, which represents a prevalent misconception that has persisted even to our own time, is found in the first *Apologia* CXXXI: “There were among the Jews certain men who were prophets of God, through whom the prophetic spirit published beforehand things that were to come to pass ere ever they happened.”



though the prophet looked forward rather than backward, though indeed the prophets lived in the future in a sense that the priests and the sages did not, we must not restrict prophecy to the foretelling of the future. The prophets were essentially men of the present. Their mission was to save Israel by recalling the nation to the obligations of the covenant. They were not soothsayers. Only occasionally do they venture predictions, and then only as an expression of their sublime faith. Moreover, all their predictions were conditional, and were so understood at the time they were uttered. Jonah, for example, first refused his mission to Nineveh because he feared that his prediction of the coming destruction of the city would, on account of the people's repentance, be unfulfilled; that is, he knew that the fulfillment of his prophecy depended upon the conduct of the people whose destruction he foretold. Thus it has happened that many a dire announcement of impending doom has been unrealized, and that the fulfillment of many a glorious prediction has been long deferred, because both were conditional, and because conditions, upon which the predictions were contingent, changed.

No better corrective for the popular misconception of the true prophetic function can be found than an examination of the etymology of the Hebrew word for prophet, for by this means we can find out what the Hebrews themselves understood by it. The Hebraic word for prophet is closely allied to an Arabic word that means to proclaim something, or to carry out some mandate.<sup>2</sup> It would appear,

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<sup>2</sup> Several alternative derivations of the Hebrew word for prophet are discussed by L. W. Batten in *The Hebrew Prophet*, p. 344; in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article "Prophet"; and in Cornill's *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 6ff.

therefore, that the Hebrew word in its root meaning signified the delivery of some message, and that the prophet was a deputed speaker. That such actually was the fundamental meaning of the word among the Hebrews appears from a passage in Exodus (IV.10ff), where we are told that Moses hesitated and drew back from his vocation to deliver Israel, saying, "O Lord, I am not a man of words, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." And the Lord, accordingly, designated Aaron as Moses's spokesman, saying, "And he shall be thy prophet unto the people: and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God." So it appears that Aaron was to be Moses's prophet in the same sense that Moses was to be God's prophet. He was to be his spokesman, or interpreter.

Such a conception, involving the idea that God revealed his will to certain selected individuals, who thus became his interpreters, was a gradual growth; and this growth, or historical development, is involved in considerable obscurity. It is quite probable that prophecy is an outgrowth of "divination." Of the "diviners" and their methods we know comparatively little except that they were men who sought to discover the divine will by external means—arrows, rods, and the sacred lot. Joseph, we are told (Gen. XLIV:15), was a diviner; and Balaam, also, was such at least by reputed calling (Num. XXII:7, 18). The art of divination seems to have been borrowed originally from the Canaanites (I Sam. VI:2), and was by the provisions of the Deuteronomic code (Deut. XVIII:10-14) expressly forbidden as "an abomination unto the Lord." It seems, however, never entirely to have

disappeared in Israel. Both Isaiah and Micah (Isa. XLIV:25; Mic. III:6) in the eighth century, and in the post-exilic period, Zechariah (Zech. X:2) refer contemptuously to the false prophets as diviners. Succeeding the diviners, and immediately preceding the prophets, were the "seers" (I Sam. IX:9), whose function was to disclose to individuals the secrets of the present and of the immediate future. The office of the seer was somewhat similar to that of the modern clairvoyant. To him men went to "inquire of the Lord," as formerly they had gone to the priest to obtain the sacred oracle by means of the sacred lot, the "Urim and Thummim." For such services the seer was paid a fee, a quarter of a shekel in at least one instance (I Sam. IX:9) is mentioned as the amount required. Samuel, to whom this fee was to be paid, was the first to represent in a complete degree the development of the idea of prophet as the mouth-piece of God. It is noteworthy that the Hebrews themselves seem to have regarded him as the first of the prophetic line; at all events, the author of the Book of Hebrews in the muster roll of the national heroes mentions "Samuel and the prophets" (Heb. XI:32) as if he headed the list. Moses, to be sure, is frequently spoken of as a prophet, but in such a way as to suggest that the term was applied to him in a retrospective sense. There is nothing to indicate that he was ever called a prophet in his own day. Samuel undoubtedly represents the completion of the long development covering many centuries, the stages of which are traceable in the names that were successively applied to the man supposed to be on somewhat intimate terms with God.

It is in the time of Samuel that we first hear of

communities of prophets. They seem to have congregated about the several local sanctuaries, for the places mentioned as their residences are local centers of Yahveh-worship. Such were Ramah in Mount Ephraim (I Sam. XIX:18); Bethel in the same vicinity (II Kings II:3); Gibeah in Benjamin (I Sam. X:5-10); Jericho on the Jordan (II Kings II:5), and Gilgal (II Kings IV:38). The number of these groups of prophets at this particular time, and their close association with the worship of the period, were resultant upon the awakening of patriotism caused by the rigors of Philistine oppression. This seems to have been more severe than any the nation had suffered hitherto. It certainly was sufficient to call forth a new national spirit, and in Israel patriotism and religion were, if not synonymous, at least correlative terms. Israel's enemies were looked upon as foes of Yahveh; and only by His help could Israel hope to throw off the yoke of the oppressors. The oppression of the nation by a foreign enemy was, consequently, the signal for the appearance of a more devout adherence to the Captain of the hosts of Israel, and of a more fervid patriotism.

The patriotic fervor of these groups of prophets seems not to have been altogether according to knowledge. They expressed it by singing, dancing, and an excitation of manner analogous to the deportment of the modern Oriental dervish (I. Sam. X:5). Like all emotional excitement, that of the prophets was highly contagious. The story is told (I Sam. XIX) that when Saul in pursuit of David went to Naioth, he caught the prophetic spirit, "and he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and fell down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, 'Is Saul

also among the prophets?" " This saying has been misinterpreted, and the prevalent opinion of the prophetic ecstasy, consequently, misunderstood. They did not mean to ask why so worldly a man found himself in so exalted a company, but rather how so distinguished a person could feel at home in such questionable society.

Though there is no evidence that Samuel originated these prophetic communities, he seems to have been in close relation with them, appearing at the head of one of them in the passage just referred to. The probability is that he saw the value of the religious patriotism of the prophets, and that he allied himself with them as a means of promoting the end he had in view, the establishment of a theocracy, a kingdom of God on earth.

In the attempt to realize this dream of a kingdom of God on earth through the establishment of the monarchy upon a firm basis, Samuel and his successors, Elijah and Elisha,<sup>3</sup> worked in close relation with the reigning king. They acted as his counsellors, and addressed him in the name of God, through him directly influencing governmental policies. Later, in the reign of kings out of sympathy with the theocratic idea, such an alliance became impossible. Hence arose the separation of religion and politics, and the complete independence of the prophetic order, the prophets taking their place against all classes as the immediate servants of Yahveh. They no longer headed political movements, nor allied themselves with any political party in the state. Unlike the priests, who were the staunch supporters of the existing order, the prophets were always protestants. Theirs was in-

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<sup>3</sup> These men were often called by the Hebrews "The former prophets."

variably the voice of protest against existing conditions, against the tendency to degrade the worship of Yahveh into a sensuous ritualism, and against the mistaken policy of trying to strengthen the political life of the nation by worldly alliances with their idolatrous neighbors.

Their attitude of insurgency naturally brought them into conflict with the priests. As the steadfast upholders of the established order in church and state, the latter looked with the distrust that the conservative always feels for the radical upon the idealism of the prophets. Their general attitude is perfectly exemplified in the position taken by Amaziah, the priest of the sanctuary at Bethel on the occasion of the preaching of Amos. After having complained to King Jeroboam, charging Amos with conspiring to incite a rebellion against the king's authority, he sarcastically advises the prophet to go back to Judah whence he had come, saying, "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house (Amos VII:12, 13).

The priests' dislike of the prophets was on the whole well founded, for the prophets not only disparaged the priestly office, but depreciated the whole ceremonial system with which the priests were identified. Amos decries the idea that the sacrificial cult was of ancient origin, "Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" he asks ironically (Amos V:25). Even more denunciatory of the priests is Hosea. Including both the royal house and their supporters, the priestly hierarchy, in one sweeping arraignment, he cries out, "Hear this, O ye priests, and hearken



O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king, for unto you pertaineth the judgment; for ye have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor" (Hos. V:1). He even charges the priests with the most revolting crimes (Hos. VI:9). In contrast to the polluted sacrifices of such "blind mouths," God, he says, desires "mercy and not sacrifice, and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings (Hos. VI:6).

Partly owing to their recalcitrant attitude toward the ruling class, the social position of the prophets was relatively lower than that of the priests, who were the most influential class in the Hebrew state. Such social inferiority was reflected in their dress. In contrast to the white robes of the priests they wore a somber-hued mantle of camel's hair. This became a symbol of the prophetic office in much the same way as the clerical coat, the cassock waistcoat, and white tie of the modern clergyman is a badge of his office. When Elijah was commissioned to anoint Elisha as his successor, he found Elisha plowing in the field, and cast upon him his mantle (I Kings XIX:16ff). Saul readily recognized Samuel by the mantle, when, at his request, the witch of Endor summoned the prophet from the abode of the dead (I Sam. XXVIII:13ff). Similarly, Ahaziah, when he hears that the person met by his messengers was a man with a garment of hair, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins, immediately identified him, saying, "It is Elijah, the Tishbite." The leather girdle is so frequently referred to as to make it probable that this, too, was an essential part of the prophet's costume. There was also a distinguishing mark upon the forehead between the eyes, probably a scar following an incision. When the prophet went to meet Ahab, after

the battle with the Syrians, he disguised himself "with his headband over his eyes," covering the characteristic scar. As soon as he took the headband away from his eyes Ahab "discerned him that he was of the prophets" (I Kings XX. 38-41).

Though some of the prophets were self-supporting, many of them seem to have lived in a precarious way upon the free-will offerings of the pious (II Kings IV:8ff). A considerable source of income was the fees paid by those who came to consult them. Apparently these fees were not fixed, but varied with the circumstances of the giver, somewhat like the perquisites of the modern clergyman for performing the marriage ceremony. Though the rather modest sum of a quarter of a shekel (about sixteen cents) is once mentioned as adequate (I Sam. IX:7-8), the fees paid were sometimes very large. When Ben-hadad, king of Syria, sent Hazael to meet Elisha to ask whether the king should recover from his illness, we are told that Hazael "took a present with him of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden (II Kings VIII:7-9). In course of time the custom of accepting fees became so notorious an abuse that the greater prophets mention it more than once as among the most flagrant evils of their time. Side by side with Ezekiel's denunciation of the priests is his arraignment of the mercenary prophets, who "go about like a roaring lion ravening the prey: they have devoured souls; they take treasure and precious things; they have made her widows many in the midst thereof" (Ezek. XXII:25). The Second Isaiah, also, protests in the same breath that "the priests teach for hire and the prophets divine for money."

The prophet's chief business, however, was not



giving advice either gratuitously or for a fee, but preaching. All the prophets were orators, and orators who spoke extempore, rather than essayists; and probably all the prophecies were delivered orally before being committed to writing.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it is certain that the early prophecies were not only oral, but lyrical, and accompanied by music. The company of prophets that Saul met after his anointing were prophesying to the music of a psaltery, and a timbrel and a pipe, and a harp, played by minstrels who went before them (I Sam. X:5). Elisha, it will be remembered, called for a minstrel to accompany his discourse before the kings. "And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of Jehovah came upon him" (II Kings III:15).

The occasions of the delivery of the prophetic addresses were mainly the popular gatherings at feasts, and for worship at the favorite shrines. Amos, for example, spoke at Bethel (Amos VII:10); and the language of the indignant chief priest implies that Amos was out of order, not in speaking there, but only because he had inveighed against the king, who was regarded as the proprietor of the sanctuary. Jeremiah preached, standing "in the gate of the Lord's house" (Jer. VIII:1); and later, when he was not allowed to enter the "house of the Lord," he commissioned Baruch to read his written prophecy on a great fast day before the Temple of Jerusalem (Jer. XXXVI:9ff).

In their preaching the prophets made an extensive use of at least one of the methods employed in our modern elementary schools. They taught by object

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<sup>4</sup> A possible exception is Ezekiel's prophecy; but even here there is no evidence to prove that any part of the book, unless it be Chapters XL-XLVIII, was written before being delivered.

lessons. Hosea gave to each of his three children names that reiterated every time they were pronounced the prophet's stern menace of overthrow for the northern kingdom (Hos. I). Isaiah wore for three years the shameful garb of a slave to impress upon his contemporaries his grim prediction that the Egyptians in whom the Hebrews trusted would be led away captive to Assyria (Is. XX: 1-4). Similarly Jeremiah wore a wooden yoke, symbolic of the yoke of the Assyrian servitude that the nations wore (Jer. XXVIII:10-13). Some of the symbolic prophecies seem to have been literary illustrations rather than to have been actually performed. It is difficult to see for example, how Jeremiah could have fulfilled in any literal way the command to lay great stones with mortar in the brick pavement "which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes" (Jer. XLIII:8, 9). Such a piece of seeming vandalism as this would certainly have been bitterly resented by the Egyptians, and would probably have cost the prophet his life. Scarcely less fatal would have been such a test of endurance as that described in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, where the prophet is commanded to lie on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, pointing with bared arm to a portrayal of the horrors of a siege; and having done this, to lie on his right side for forty days more, in a similar attitude, prophesying the while against the house of Judah (Ezek. IV:1-8). The fact that these symbolic acts were not in all cases actually performed did not lessen their value as illustrations of the truths the prophets were trying to enforce, even though their appeal was through the written word.

In exchanging the written for the oral form, the

prophets were not actuated by literary ambition. They were not trying to furnish classics for the perusal of a later age. The written was to serve the same purpose as the spoken word. In both his speaking and his writing the prophet invariably addressed, not posterity, but his immediate contemporaries, speaking chiefly of present sin, and present duty. Moreover, it is highly improbable that many of the prophets could write, writing in ancient Israel being a highly specialized profession, followed by comparatively few. Some controlling necessity must have influenced the prophets to change from the oral to the written form of appeal. What this necessity was we know, at least in the case of Jeremiah. For twenty-one years he had confined himself to oral preaching, but in the fourth year of king Jehoiakim's reign he dictated to Baruch the scribe, the prophecies he had hitherto delivered orally. The reason for this action is expressly stated: "And Jeremiah commanded Baruch saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the Lord: therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fast day. . . . It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way . . ." (Jer. XXXVI:1-6). The passage is deeply significant both because it states the purpose of the writing, which is thus seen to be identical with the purpose of Jeremiah's oral preaching—namely, to recall Judah from its "evil way"—and because it also explicitly states the reason for the substitution of the written for the oral form of address. The reason is suggested by the statement, "I am shut up, I cannot go into the house of the

Lord." This has been interpreted<sup>5</sup> to mean, not that Jeremiah was in prison at the time, for this could not have been the case, but that he was in danger of his life if he appeared in public. Indeed, as a result of Baruch's public reading of the roll before the king, an attempt was made to imprison both the prophet and the scribe. The significance of the whole incident is unmistakable. The change from the oral to the written form of prophecy was due to the fact that, for one reason or another, it had become impossible for the prophet to reach the ears of the people, so that he was obliged to have recourse for the delivery of his message, to the written form.

As a result of this change, we have the prophetic literature, which comprises more than one half the contents of the Old Testament. When we examine this literature with a view to ascertaining its literary characteristics, we find that it is in form dramatic, that it is written in the form of dialogue, but with the names of the speakers omitted. Such an omission adds incalculably to the difficulty of understanding the prophetic books, for one is continually at a loss to identify the speaker in a given passage. Usually the chief speaker is God; sometimes it is the prophet himself who speaks for God, while the other parts of the dialogue are borne by the people. Often, however, the dialogue is rendered more complex by the introduction of other speakers. Now, these are the heathen; and again, they are merely disembodied voices who interrupt the speeches with lyric utterances expressing the feelings aroused by the preceding speech, in this way resembling the choruses in an oratorio. To

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<sup>5</sup> Batten, *The Hebrew Prophet*, p. 145.

realize what a serious obstacle to the understanding of written prophecy is offered by the omission of the names of the speakers, one has but to consider how difficult it would be to read intelligently one of Shakespeare's plays under similar conditions—that is, with no suggestion as to who is speaking, and with no indentation of the lines to indicate a change of speaker. As an illustration we may glance at a few familiar lines from one of Shakespeare's best-known plays,<sup>6</sup> printed, as the prophetic books are usually printed, in a way to give the minimum of help to the understanding:

Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture. Give me my principal and let me go. I have it ready for thee; here it is. He hath refused it in the open court: He shall have merely justice and his bond. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel! I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word. Shall I not barely have my principal? Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, to be so taken at thy peril, Jew. Why, then the devil give him good of it! I'll stay no longer here in question.

An example of the simplest form of prophetic dialogue is found in the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah—the vision of the divine Warrior from Edom. The speakers are the prophet and Yahveh, the two awed questions of the prophet being answered by the stately announcement of Him who comes to judge the earth, and save His people:<sup>7</sup>

(The Prophet) Who is this that cometh from Edom,  
                     With crimson garments from Bozrah?  
                     This that is glorious in his apparel,  
                     Marching in the greatness of his strength?

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<sup>6</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, sc. III: 335-344.

<sup>7</sup> The arrangement of the text is that of "*The Modern Reader's Bible*." Edited by Professor R. G. Moulton.

(Yahveh) I that speak in righteousness,  
Mighty to save.

(The Prophet) Wherefore art thou red  
In thine apparel,  
And thy garments  
Like him that treadeth in the wine fat?

(Yahveh) I have trodden the wine press alone;  
And of the peoples there was no man with  
me:  
Yea, I trod them in mine anger,  
And trampled them in my fury;  
And their life blood is sprinkled upon my  
garments,  
And I have stained all my raiment.

For the day of vengeance was in my heart,  
And the year of my redeemed is come.  
And I looked, and there was none to help;  
And I wondered that there was none to  
uphold:

Therefore mine own arm brought salva-  
tion unto me;  
And I trod down the peoples in mine  
anger,  
And made them drunk in my fury,  
And I poured out their life blood on the  
earth.

A more elaborate example of the prophetic dialogue, and more difficult to understand as ordinarily printed, because in it occur the lyrical cries of disembodied voices, is found in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah:

(Yahveh) Comfort ye, comfort ye my people  
Saith your God.  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,  
And cry unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished,  
That her iniquity is pardoned

That she hath received of the Lord's  
hand double for all her sins.

(First Voice) Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of  
the Lord,  
Make straight in the desert a highway  
for our God.  
Every valley shall be exalted,  
And every mountain and hill shall be  
made low:  
And the crooked shall be made straight,  
And the rough places plain:  
And the glory of the Lord shall be re-  
vealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together:  
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(Second Voice) Cry!

(Third Voice) What shall I cry?  
All flesh is grass,  
And all the goodliness thereof is as the  
flower of the field:  
The grass withereth,  
The flower fadeth,  
Because the breath of the Lord bloweth  
upon it:  
Surely the people is grass!

Fourth Voice) The grass withereth,  
The flower fadeth:  
But the word of our God shall stand for  
ever.

(Fifth Voice) O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,  
Get thee up into the high mountain;  
O thou, that tellest good tidings to Jerusa-  
lem,  
Lift up thy voice with strength;  
Lift it up, be not afraid;  
Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold,  
your God!

(Sixth Voice) Behold the Lord God will come as a  
mighty one,



And his arm shall rule for him:  
 Behold, his reward is with him,  
 And his recompense before him.  
 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,  
 He shall gather the lambs in his arm,  
 And carry them in his bosom,  
 And shall gently lead them that give suck.

Sometimes the prophetic dialogue is further complicated and obscured by the introduction of description, or of narrated vision, designed to furnish a background or setting for the dialogue. An interesting illustration is furnished by the tenth chapter of Isaiah, where the message concerning Assyria is, without any explanation interrupted by a narrated vision of the approach from the north of an invading army of Assyrians, and the consternation caused by its devastating march toward the Holy City:

He is come to Aiath—  
 He is passed through Migron—  
 At Michmash he layeth up his baggage—  
 They are gone over the pass—  
 They have taken up their lodging at Geba—  
 Ramah trembleth—  
 Gibeah of Saul is fled.

Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim!  
 Hearken, O Laishah!  
 O thou poor Anathoth  
 Madmenah is a fugitive—  
 The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee—  
 This very day shall he halt at Nob—  
 He shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion,  
 the hill of Jerusalem.

To the dramatic complexity of Hebrew prophecy English literature furnishes no very close analogy. Probably the nearest approach is Shelley's lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*. A much closer



analogy is furnished by the sacred oratorio, with its solos corresponding to the prophetic monologues, its duets and quartettes corresponding to the prophetic dialogues, and its crashing choruses corresponding to the dirges and triumph songs of prophecy.

Thus by stirring address, by the lyric utterance of impassioned poetry, now by symbolic acts, now by written tract or historical illustration, by whatever best means were at hand, the prophets sought to impress upon the half-awakened conscience of the nation, upon careless monarchs and yet more careless people—the divinely inspired truths that glowed within their own enlightened souls. Sometimes they played the rôle of statesmen, fearlessly advocating the theory that Israel was a theocracy; sometimes they played the rôle of social reformers, pointing out the evils of the social system, luxury, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and the oppression of the poor. As social reformers, they became the champions of the oppressed, and as such, they assailed most often those sins of commercial dishonesty which in modern times have been supposed to be particularly characteristic of the Jew, but from which Gentiles are not, it appears, wholly exempt. Always they stood forth as ethical and religious leaders.

Their ethical and religious teaching may be summarized in three fundamental propositions. Their most insistent emphasis was upon the nation's obligation to be faithful to the covenant between Yahveh and Israel, whereby God had chosen Israel out of all the nations of the earth to be His people, and whereby they in return had elected to serve Him faithfully. Though this idea of the covenant was the most fundamental part of the prophetic teach-

ing, the second was scarcely less important—namely, the purpose of the covenant, which was the building up of a kingdom of God on earth. Such a kingdom was to be the external expression of the covenant, for the end and aim of the covenant was, in the prophetic thought, the kingdom of God on earth founded, and though not yet realized, destined to be realized as a universal dominion through Israel. Closely allied to this thought of the hope of Israel as part of the larger hope for the world at large was the third of the prophetic ideals—the conservation of the Hebrew state, as the condition of realizing the hope of a kingdom of God on earth. The Israelitish state as it then existed seemed to them a sacred thing, because it was in their thought the kingdom of God already founded and destined to attain to a perfect purity of faith and morals, and to become the spiritual leader of the nations of the world. Ultimately, it is true, the prophets did come to realize that the kingdom of God might exist apart from any embodiment of it in the form of a political state, that, indeed, the destruction of the Jewish state might be the triumph of their God—the triumph of righteousness over sin—and that, therefore, the religious ideals of Israel might survive their national overthrow. But it was not till after the Exile, when the scepter was seen to have departed forever from Judah, that such a complete spiritualization of the hope of Israel could occur.

It is in the union of aims at the same time so idealistic and so practical as those embodied in the three propositions just referred to that the uniqueness of Israelitish prophecy consists.

The old idea of prophecy as having been peculiar to Israel must, in the light of our ampler knowledge of Semitic life in general, be given up. All Semitic

peoples had their prophets. Like sacrifice, priesthood, temple, Sabbath, fasts, feasts, sacred pillars, the distinction between clean and unclean, prophecy was the common possession of the whole Semitic family of nations.<sup>8</sup>

But a succession of men so absorbed in "the living God," and at the same time so intensely practical in their aims, at once statesmen, reformers, and idealist, cannot be found in antiquity outside of Israel. In a very true sense it may be said that prophecy is one of the world's debts to Israel, for, taken as a class, the Hebrew prophets have been without a parallel in human history in their work and influence.

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<sup>8</sup> Sec. J. M. P. Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems*, pp. 3-25.

## CHAPTER III

### AMOS, THE PROPHET AS SOCIAL REFORMER

ONE of the tiniest books among the world's classics is the prophecy of Amos. Indeed, if printed in modern form it would make only a pamphlet of very few pages. Yet it is in many respects most notable. In the first place it is probably the oldest book of the Bible which has come down to us in anything like its original form. Yet, although it is commonly classed among the minor prophets because of its brevity, and although it has been neglected by Bible students till recent years, it is nevertheless of profound interest not only because it is the first preserved from ancient Israel, but because it is one of the most significant mileposts in the upward progress of humanity.

The prophet Amos was a herdman of Tekoa, a little mountain hamlet twelve miles south of Jerusalem, on the high plateau overlooking the valley of the Dead Sea some 4,000 feet below. Scott, in the opening chapters of *The Talisman*, describing the journey of the Crusader, Kenneth of the Couching Leopard, with the Saracen Emir to visit Theodoric of Engedi, has given us a vivid picture of this desolate region. Here Amos, who is described in the heading of the book as "among the shepherds of Tekoa," tended a peculiar kind of desert sheep, still prized among the Arabs for the excellence of their wool, and was a dresser of sycamores. This tree, not our sycamore, is easily grown in a poor soil, and

produces a fruit like a small fig, with a sweet but watery taste which is eaten only by the poor. The ripening of this fruit was hastened by pinching or bruising it, which accounts for the term Amos applies to himself—"a pincher of sycamores."

How Amos became a prophet we have no means of knowing. He certainly did not belong to the prophetic guild, for he emphatically denies being connected with it or with the professional schools of the prophets. His words imply that he was following his ordinary occupations when he became conscious of a summons to preach. "And Yahveh took me from after the flock; and Yahveh said unto me, Go, prophesy to my people, Israel" (Amos VIII:15).

In obedience to such a summons he visited the autumn festival at Bethel where he uttered his message of doom, declaring, "And the high plans of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword" (VII:9). It does not seem surprising that the high priest Amaziah protested against his preaching, advising him to go back to his own country "and there eat bread and prophesy there" (VII:12).

From internal evidence we may date the preaching of Amos pretty accurately. The background is the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II. This was a brilliant and prosperous reign of forty-one years, during which, owing to the weakening of the power of Syria which had been almost annihilated by Assyrian attacks from the east, Jeroboam was able to re-conquer the lost territory east of the Jordan, and to extend the borders of Israel to the passes of the Lebanons (Hamath), and apparently even to wrest some of the country of Syria proper from

the power of Damascus (II Kings XIV:28). He also laid the Moabites under tribute; and "restored the coast of Israel from the entering in of Hamath into the sea of the Arabah" (II Kings XIV:25), namely, from the far North to the Dead Sea. Thus in the days of Jeroboam II the combined territory of Israel and Judah was about equal to that of the united Kingdom of Israel in the palmiest days of David and Solomon.

This period of prosperity was also, it appears from the book of Amos, an era of self-confidence and luxury with their accompanying moral vices, particularly those vices to which an ancient oriental people were especially susceptible—cruel oppression of the poor, the perversion of justice for bribes, and dishonest business practices. Notwithstanding the flagrant social evils of the time, the people persistently regarded their material prosperity as indubitable evidence of God's favor, and deemed it necessary only to maintain an elaborate ritual worship in order to fulfil their obligations and retain God's favor.

Such fallacious reasoning revolted the simple conscience of the peasant reared in the pure traditions of desert Yahvism. The record of his preaching is no elegantly turned essay on conduct, but the outpouring of a heart aflame with indignation at social injustice. In this lies the secret of Amos's astonishing literary style. Nothing could at first glance seem more amazing than the breadth of human interest, embracing both acute observation and wide historical knowledge, shown by this illiterate oriental farmer. Not only does he display complete acquaintance with the social conditions of his day in the Northern Kingdom, but he possesses information about far more distant peoples as well. The

rapid survey of the nations immediately bordering on Israel—Syria, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Moab—is full of precise detail as to localities and events, with a keen appreciation of national character. He knows of the Philistines' migration from Crete, and of the Syrians from Kir (IX:7). He is familiar also with the phenomenon of the annual inundation of the Nile, and with such distant cities as Gath, Hamath, and Calneh. Yet his range of knowledge may be accounted for by the circumstances of his life, which are suggestively indicated by Prof. George Adam Smith.<sup>9</sup>

Nor is the herdsman of Tekoa unskilled in literary composition. Like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, this ancient farmer had strange powers of speech. The orations that compose the book are written in rugged, generally pure, Hebrew; and the thought is expressed in the parallelism and accentual rhythm of Hebrew poetry. In few ancient books is the effect of the spoken word more exactly reproduced. To read the book is to feel the illusion that one is listening to impassioned oratory. Though probably the material of the prophecy is shortened from its originally spoken form, it retains all the effect of pointed and dramatic delivery, with that lyrical fervor which lends a special charm to the highest Hebrew oratory. The resemblance of the opening address with its symmetry of structure, its recurrent phrases, and its balanced clauses, to Mark Anthony's speech in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* is greater than any actual oration in classical or modern history.

The prophet arraigns in turn all the six states of Palestine that bordered upon Israel—Syria, Philistia, Phœnicia, Edom, Ammon and Moab. He

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<sup>9</sup> *The Book of the Twelve Prophets.* Vol. I, pp. 79-81.



naturally begins with Syria, the most powerful and at the same time the most hated of the enemies of Israel, but seems thereafter to follow no geographical order, passing from Aram on the northeast to Philistia on the southwest, thence to Tyre on the northwest, crosses to the southeast and Edom, leaps Moab to Ammon, and then comes back again to Moab. To the ancient Hebrew there was, however, a suggestion in the very illogicalness of the sequence. To him it suggested the swift successive and unpredictable strokes of lightning; and always in Israel there remained the associations of the storm with the manifestations of God. The thunder was thought of as the sound of his voice, and the lightning as the flash of his sword. Each of the eight stanzas is introduced by the same formula:

Thus saith Yahveh:  
For three transgressions of . . .  
Yea four, I will not revoke it.

And it is to be noted that each of the successive peoples mentioned is more closely related to the northern kingdom either by racial or commercial ties than the preceding. It is as if Israel were made to feel the terror of converging thunderstorms, which rapidly changes the exaltation with which they listen to the denunciation of Syria, their hereditary foe, to the satisfaction of hearing that the Philistines are also to be punished, and then to the dismay of knowing that Judah, the sister kingdom, is likewise on the list of the proscribed, and finally to the furious consternation of the discovery that God will pour out the vials of his wrath upon northern Israel.

The most noteworthy fact about Amos's arraignment of the nations of his day is that each of those surrounding Israel is charged with barbarous cruel-



ties, massacre, and sacrilege, while Judah and Israel are blamed only for civic and domestic evils—luxury, bribery, and oppression of the poor. It is his implied realization that these crimes of civilization are really more cruel and criminal than the more spectacular atrocities of barbarism that justifies the designation of Amos as “the first Socialist.” Throughout his book he shows the peasant’s hatred of wealth. More than once he mentions contemptuously those who have adopted the oriental fashion of reclining at meals (III:12; VI:4). There is a striking similarity between Amos and the author of our own fourteenth century satire, *Piers the Plowman*, in respect to their outlook upon the life of their day. There is the same blame of the idle rich, the same denunciation of the unfaithful bishops whose “dogs” (the priests) “dare not bark,” and the same pity for the poor “that wonyeth in cotes.”

Like the author of *Piers the Plowman*, Amos believes in social justice and his prescription for the ills of his day is a very simple one:

Seek good and not evil that ye may live; and so Yahveh, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate (namely in the courts of law): it may be that Yahveh, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

V: 14, 15;

and again he says:

Let justice roll down as waters  
And righteousness as a mighty stream.

V:24.

Amos did not believe that Israel could be saved except through religion; but he distinguished sharply

between religion in its ceremonial aspects and religion in its social implications. Justice between nation and nation, and between man and man, rather than sacred assemblies and offerings—this is God's demand, and He will relentlessly punish any nation, even the chosen people, who are morally corrupt.

This teaching that God was a God of righteousness, that he demands righteousness of the nation whom he favors, and that he demands nothing else, had never before been enunciated. It was proclaimed to a people who, like other Semitic peoples, believed that their God was a strictly national Deity, whose patronage was to be won by conformity to His ritual, and whose favor was to be evidenced in national prosperity and victory over enemies. To them it must have been a most unwelcome message that Amos uttered. It was wholly a message of doom. He did not expect to see reforms established. The epilogue to the prophecy, with its vision of the nation restored to favor (IX:8b-15), is clearly a later addition. To him the moral corruption is deep seated, and the future hopeless. The nation's sins and God's inexorable justice alike demand punishment; and Israel, he says, will go into captivity beyond Damascus. His prediction was fulfilled within a generation by the capture of Samaria, and the deportation of the northern tribes, but far more important than such a verification of Amos's inspired statesmanship has been the confirmation that history has so abundantly furnished. Again and again has history demonstrated the truth of Amos's contention that the nation that allows the exploitation of its poor, perverts justice in its courts and corrupts its business system, is doomed to ultimate extinction.

## ANALYSIS OF BOOK OF AMOS

- I. Title and date, I:1-2.
- II. Opening address, I:3—II:
  - A. The nations shall be punished for sin, I:3-II:5.
  - B. Israel also shall be not exempt, II:6-16.
- III. A group of six fragments of addresses expanding the indictment of Israel in the form of oracles of denunciation, each ending with a prediction of the nation's doom, III-VI:
  - A. The approaching destruction of the civil life of Israel, III-IV:3.
  - B. The substitution of ritual for righteousness IV:4-13.
  - C. The nation's sin and the remedy, V:1-17.
  - D. The Day of Yahveh—the expectation and the reality, V:18-27.
  - E. The evil of the national worship and the false confidence inspired by it, VI.
- IV. Visions of Destruction, VII—IX:
  - A. Locusts, VII:1-3.
  - B. Fire, VII:4-6.
  - C. Plumbline, VII:7-9.
  - D. Summer fruit, VIII:1-14.
  - E. Yahveh by the Altar, IX:1-8a.
- V. Amos and Amaziah, VII:10-17.
- VI. Epilogue (by a later hand), IX:8b-15.

## SUGGESTED READING ON AMOS

Bertholet, *History of Hebrew Civilization*, pp. 346-384 (on Hebrew religion).

Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 37-46.

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 313-318.

Farrar, *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 49-68.

Kautzsch, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 50-53.

Margolis and Marx, *History of the Jewish People*, pp. 90-94.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 146-153.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 7-12.

Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, pp. 73ff.

#### QUESTIONS ON AMOS

Comment on the life and times of Amos.

What are the grounds for calling Amos the first social reformer?

What social wrongs did he attack?

What is his attitude toward ritual?

What new idea about religion did he set forth?

Discuss the truth of the statement that in Amos we see the religion of Israel breaking through the bounds of nationality and becoming a world religion.

What is the significance of Amos's denial that he is either a prophet or a son of a prophet (VII: 14)?

Comment upon the rhetorical effectiveness as a speech of Chapter I.

Notice the figurative language Amos uses, *e.g.*, in I:2; II:13; III:5-6, 8, 12; IV:2-3; V:19; VI:12; VII:1-2; VIII:1-2; IX:5, 9.

Are these figures of speech such as would naturally occur to a peasant farmer?

Show that the essence of his message is to be found in Chapter V:14-15 and in II:2.

## CHAPTER IV

### HOSEA, THE PROPHET OF THE LOVE OF GOD

A GREATER contrast it would be hard to imagine than that between Amos, the stern preacher of national righteousness, and his contemporary Hosea, who has sometimes been called the St. John of the Old Testament. Unlike Amos, who came from the southern kingdom, Hosea was himself a native of the North. To him the territory of the northern kingdom is "the land" (I:2). It is to be noted that nearly all the places he mentions are localities in the North, and that its king is "our king" (VII:5). As a result, he was far more sympathetic in his attitude toward the northern people than Amos had been. Probably this was in part due also to his character, for he seems to have been an extremely emotional type of man, disciplined by suffering.

His personal life had much to do with his prophetic activity. The facts are found in Chapters I and III. According to the text, Hosea by divine command marries Gomer, a daughter of Diblaim, literally "a daughter of two fig cakes," or a worthless woman—namely, a common prostitute. The story of the marriage is given in two forms. In Chapter I it is told by a third person, but in Chapter III we are given the experience of Hosea from his own lips. After buying her at the price of a slave (III:2), he subjected her to discipline and restraint for a considerable time; and, when children were born, he gave them names which made them walking ser-

mons. These chapters have been interpreted in three ways: first as being a literal record of facts; second, as being wholly allegorical—an example of symbolic prophecy; and third, as the prophetic interpretation of a real domestic tragedy, the wreck of his marriage being recognized by the prophet as a divinely ordered means of teaching him the true nature of God's relations with Israel.

Whether we regard the story as a narrative of fact, as a *tour de force* of prophetic symbolism, or as a retrospective interpretation of a domestic tragedy, the prophetic significance of it is perfectly clear. Israel, Yahveh's bride, is disloyal and unworthy of his love. She must therefore be disciplined by the suffering of exile until she learns fidelity. Afterward she will be brought back home and given a second chance. The analogy between the disloyalty of Gomer and that of Israel is clearly explained in Chapter II, where Israel is charged with giving praise and gratitude to the Baalim for the fruits of the soil, instead of recognizing Yahveh as the giver of these gifts.

The analogy was self-evident to those to whom Hosea spoke, for among the ancient Hebrews, as among other Semitic peoples, the deity was thought of as the husband of the land, and the people as the children of their union. Indeed, the word "baal" meant husband as well as lord.

The key to the understanding of Hosea's prophecy is the religious situation in northern Israel in the eighth century. The Hebrews had been settled in Canaan for seven centuries. They had come as desert nomads, knowing nothing of agriculture. Gradually they had assimilated with the Canaanites, who were an agricultural people, and whose religion was an agricultural religion. Their god was Baal,

who was a symbol of the productive powers of nature, and was symbolized by the plated images of the bull to which Hosea contemptuously alludes. In the eighth century B. C. Baal worship had degenerated. As symbols of the productive powers of nature, the worship of the Baalim had become associated with a degrading sensuality. Side by side with the Baal was placed a corresponding female symbol, the Ashtoreth, and the relations between the two deities were set forth as the example and the motive of unrestrained sensuality. The result was the religious prostitution akin to that which Herodotus describes as prevalent in Babylon at a later time in connection with the worship of Ashtar. The evil became all the worse from the fact that in the popular view Yahveh himself was regarded as one of the Baalim, and the chief of them. Under the influence of such confusion, the great festivals, like the autumn festival at Bethel, at which Amos spoke, had become occasions of revelry and sexual immorality (Amos II:7; Hos. VI:9).

To the seductions of this degenerate religion the Hebrews upon their settlement in Canaan were peculiarly susceptible in the process of their adjustment to changed conditions. They were forced to learn agriculture. The only possible teachers of agriculture were the Canaanites themselves; and hence it was impossible to learn agriculture without learning Baalism at the same time. The problem of Hosea was to substitute the desert god Yahveh for the Canaanitish Baal in the whole round of agricultural life—to lead them to recognize in Yahveh the one who really gives the grain and the new wine and the oil (Hos. II:8). Chapter II clearly brings out this basic idea of Hosea's preaching—Israel's failure to recognize Yahveh as the god



of the harvest and her partial adoption of the Canaanitish Baal is a kind of religious adultery:

Yea, upon her children will I have no mercy for they are children of whoredom, for their mother hath played the harlot; she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers that gave me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink. Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband: for then was it better with me than now. For she did not know that I gave her the grain, and the new wine, and the oil, and multiplied unto her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.

II: 4-8.

Hosea's message centers in the thought of God. Amos had been most deeply concerned about the wrongs done to man by his fellows. He does not mention the plated images of the bull; but protests against religion divorced from social justice, and against the substitution of ritual for righteousness. Hosea sees in the religion of his day a gross misrepresentation of God. He is the first religious teacher so far as we know to attack image worship (Hos. IV:12-17; XI:2; XIV:3). Speaking of the bull images, he bluntly declares that there is no divine power behind them:

Thy calf, O Samaria, is loathsome. . . . The workman made it: therefore it is not God.

VIII: 5, 6.

Here the word translated "calf" is a contemptuous one. Perhaps a better rendering would be "little bull calf," for it refers to the small plated images of a bull which were the symbols of Yahveh in the



local sanctuaries of the North (I Kings XII:28; Comp. Ex. XXXII:4, 5). Such gross materialism, Hosea believes, shows lack of intelligence; and to this idea of the crass stupidity of idolatry he returns again and again:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

IV: 6;

and again:

Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the understanding. My people ask counsel of their stock, and their staff declareth unto them.

IV: 11, 12.

Now he calls Ephraim "a silly dove without heart," or, as we should say, "without brains," the heart being in Hebrew thought the seat of the intellect. Again he compares his people to a stubborn heifer, and to an unturned, (half-baked) cake. And in one of the most striking passages in the book, quoted later by the Great Teacher, he makes God say, "For I desire goodness and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (VI:6).

This rejection of knowledge Hosea ascribes to three causes—the people's vices, the priests' negligence, and the weak foreign policy of the rulers:

My people ask counsel of their stock, and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredom hath caused them to err, and they have played the harlot, departing from under their God.

IV: 11, 12.

"Hear ye this, O ye priests, and hearken, O house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king; for unto you pertaineth the judgment; for ye have been a snare at Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor."

V: 1.

Nothing could be more striking than the insight Hosea shows in his diagnosis of Israel's sin. Nor is his sagacity as a statesman less noteworthy. He was living in the last years of Jeroboam's reign and in the troubled years that followed upon Jeroboam's death, when few and evil were the days of those who sat on the throne in Samaria. Within seven years there were six recognized rulers and four changes of dynasty, with three assassinations. The words of Hosea (VII:7): "All their kings are fallen," referring evidently to Israel, or again, "As for Samaria her king is cut off as foam upon the water" (X:7), would be descriptive of the situation at almost any time after Jeroboam's death in 740 B. C. Political conditions were indeed chaotic. Owing to the vacillating policy of her kings, Israel sought help, now from Assyria, and now from Egypt. All this coquetting with foreign powers Hosea regarded as evidence of distrust in Yahveh, and, therefore, as a national sin. In view of it, he makes God say:

They call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the birds of the heavens.

VII: 11, 12.

But Hosea's great contribution to the religious thought of the world was connected with his thought of God. Out of his own bitter experience that wrecked his life, and broke his heart, grew the realization that if a man could forgive the infidelity of his wife, God would even more certainly forgive the unfaithfulness of Israel. "I would not execute the fierceness of mine anger . . . for I am God and not man." Never before Hosea, so far as we know, had anyone attained to the idea of God that he pre-

sented: that God loves even when he punishes—that indeed his punishments are not merely retributive, but disciplinary. Hosea introduced a new idea into the theology of Israel when he ventured to name the love of God. Amos was the prophet of morality, of human right, of the ethical order in human life; but Hosea is a prophet of religion.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

- I. Title. I:1.
- II. Israel the unfaithful wife. I:2—III.
  - A. A domestic tragedy. I:2—II:1.
  - B. Punishment followed by reconciliation. II:2-23.
  - C. Love for faithless wife, a symbol of God's love for unfaithful Israel. III.
- III. Fragments of discourses on the faithlessness of Israel in contrast to the faithfulness of God. IV—XIV.
  - A. The morally degenerate people. IV—VII:7.
  - B. The politically degenerate people. VII:8—X.
  - C. The divine fatherhood. XI:1-11.
  - D. Israel's ingratitude. XI:12—XII:14.
  - E. Her idolatry, the just cause of her ruin. XIII:1-16.
  - F. Return and blessing. XIV.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON HOSEA

Cornhill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 47-55.

Duff, *Theology and Ethics of the Hebrews*, pp. 63-78.

Farrar, *Minor Prophets*, pp. 82-102.

Harper, *International Critical Commentary*, pp. CXLVI ff.

Houghton, *Hebrew Life and Thought*, pp. 183-211.

Kautzsch, *Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 53.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 153-155.

Sanders and Kent, *Messages of the Earlier Prophets*, pp. 47-76.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 13-16.

Smith, G. A. *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, pp. 212-354.

Smith, W. R. *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 164-170.

#### QUESTIONS ON HOSEA

How does Hosea differ in temper from Amos?

How would the former's nationality partly account for his more sympathetic attitude?

What differing interpretations of the narrative in Chapters I-III have been given, and which appeals to you most?

What is Hosea's estimate of the conditions in northern Israel? See especially IV:1, 2; VI:9; VII:3-7.

To what does he attribute the prevalent corruption? See IV:1-6.

What is the ground of Hosea's hope in the midst of ruin and despair?

What contribution did Hosea make to ethical monotheism?

Show that the teachings of Amos and Hosea are complementary—that neither is complete without the other.

## CHAPTER V

### ISAIAH, THE PROPHET AS STATESMAN

THE third of the eighth century prophets was Isaiah ben Amoz. His close connection with the politics of Jerusalem during the forty years of his ministry, together with the position accorded him by the reigning monarchs Ahaz and Hezekiah, have led to the belief that he was of noble birth. He is known to have been married, and to have been the father of two sons, whose symbolic names made them effective sermons.

He became a prophet in the year of the death of King Uzziah in 740 B. C., when he saw in the Temple an elaborately symbolic vision of Yahveh on his throne, surrounded by Seraphim, who sing the words that inspired one of the best of Christian hymns, Bishop Heber's "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" Through this vision we may trace the steps of Isaiah's inner experience: first, a conviction of an exalted God; next, a sense of his own unworthiness, and that of his people; then, assurance that God can purify his lips; finally, the hearing of the Divine call, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and the prophet's consecration of himself to a hopeless task. He is told that his mission is to last till the destruction of the land is complete.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Isa. VI. The second part of verse 13 is not original, but was a later insertion.

Isaiah's prophetic activity falls naturally into three periods: first, that preceding the Syro-Ephraimitic War, 740-735; second, the period during and just after this war, and third, the period of Assyrian supremacy. In each of these periods he appears as a wise statesman, and at the same time as a practical idealist. How long he survived the third crisis, the invasion of Sennacherib in 701, we have no means of knowing. There is a Jewish tradition, which, however, is no older than the first century A. D., that he was sawn asunder during the reign of Manasseh in the reaction against the prophets, recorded in II Kings XXI, which took place between 686 and 641 B. C.

The first period of Isaiah's prophetic work immediately followed the death of Uzziah of Judah (740 B. C.). His long reign of nearly forty years in Jerusalem was almost exactly contemporary with Jeroboam's brilliant reign in Samaria. Nor was it less prosperous. The author of Chronicles (II Chron. XXVI) tells at some length of his achievements. He extended the boundaries of the southern kingdom eastward, southward and westward. He built towers along the desert trade routes for the protection of commerce. He also strongly fortified Jerusalem, and increased his army to 307,500 men. With this he subdued the Philistines, and exacted tribute from the nomad peoples of the desert—the Arabians that dwelt at Gur-Baal and the Mennim. The historian says he loved husbandry (II Chron. XXVI:10). He certainly encouraged, not only farming, but other industries as well, so that Judah, and especially the city of Jerusalem, grew rapidly both in population and in wealth. Isaiah's early addresses (II:6-9; III:1-15; 16-23) furnish a vivid picture of the Jerusalem of his day with its wealth

and its vice, its perversions of justice (V:7), and its proud women "walking with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet" (III:16).

In this first period of his work, Isaiah appears as a social reformer akin to Amos. Indeed, his denunciations of the frivolity of the women of Jerusalem in Chapter III recalls Amos's designation of the women of Samaria as "kine of Bashan" (Amos IV:1), and his charges of social injustice and oppression of the poor (III:13 ff) seems like an echo of the very words of the peasant prophet who had preceded him (Amos II:6,7). Again he echoes Hosea in the assertion (V:13): "Therefore my people are gone into captivity for lack of knowledge" (*cf.* Hos. IV:6), apparently identifying, as Hosea had done, immorality with stupidity. The sermons of Isaiah that belong to this period are: The Prophet's Call (VI); The Terror of the Coming Day of Yahveh (II:6-21); The Fall of Judah's Wicked Leaders (III:1-15); The Frivolity of Sensuality of the Rich Women of Jerusalem (III:16-24); The Parable of the Vineyard (V:1-24); The Doom of Samaria (IX:8—X:4 and V:25-29).

In the few prophecies that can be certainly assigned to this first period, the comprehensiveness and constructiveness of Isaiah's thinking are clearly apparent. He evidently had the organizing or theological mind. He goes far toward a formal statement of monotheism; he speaks of idols as *elilim*, nonentities, and emphasizes Yahveh's holiness, *i.e.*, his unique deity and his glory, *i.e.*, his manifestation in nature (II:8-20). His favorite term for God is "The Holy One of Israel." Toward such a transcendent deity the proper attitude to assume is one of reverence and humility. Like the church



fathers, and like Dante, Spenser, and Milton, who followed them, Isaiah believed pride to be the cardinal sin of man, and humility his greatest virtue. The prime necessity for Godly living became in his view the negation of pride, and the adoption of an attitude of humility before Him who alone is to be exalted (II:11).

After the first period of his preaching, his position at court and the events of the time made his primary interests political. It is significant that after his first period all the records of his prophetic work which have been preserved to us concern political situations. The political prophecies of Isaiah's second period were called forth by the movement started about 736 among the little states of the Westland to oppose a united front against Assyrian aggression. Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria, after vainly trying by persuasion to influence Ahaz of Jerusalem to join the coalition, invaded Judah. The effect upon the minds of king and people is described in Isaiah's characteristically vivid way, "His heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind" (VII:2).

In this crisis Isaiah advised Ahaz to have no fear of the two confederate kings, whom he calls "remnants of burnt-out torches" (VII:4), but to trust calmly in Yahveh, and to avoid all entangling alliances, advocating for Judah a policy of strict neutrality like that adopted by Switzerland in 1914. It is in this connection that Isaiah formulated a statement which expressed one of the fundamental articles of his creed, and which is the basis of his being often called the prophet of faith. It is in his warning to Ahaz (VII:9; cf. XXVIII:16 and XXX:15): "If ye will not believe (*ta aminu*) ye shall not

be established" (*te amenu*).<sup>10</sup> These words mark an epoch in the history of the development of religious thought. Never before had the distinctively religious principle of faith been recognized as the touchstone of character and of destiny.

Ahaz, however, rejected Isaiah's advice. Probably he had already appealed to Tiglath-Pileser IV for help against the two northern kings. "I am thy servant and thy son"—such was the message to the Assyrian king; "come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel" (II Kings XVI:7). In response to Ahaz's appeal, the Assyrian king promptly accepted the tribute sent by Ahaz as a vassal king, and made war upon the threatening confederates. In 732 B. C. he completely crushed and absorbed into the Assyrian Empire the kingdom of Syria, so long the buffer between Israel and Assyrian aggression.

A decade later, in the reign of Sargon Second, grandson of Tiglath-Pileser IV, the Assyrians captured Samaria, and deported the leaders among the people. The northern kingdom henceforth ceased to exist.

Considerable difference of opinion exists as to the wisdom of Ahaz in appealing to Assyria for help. It is not improbable that the southern kingdom owed its continued existence of nearly a century and a half to its having become tributary to Assyria. It might have lasted considerably longer, had it not been an extremely turbulent subject state, continually intriguing with Egypt, which never gave any effective help against Assyria, though constantly pro-

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<sup>10</sup> This is one of Isaiah's characteristic plays upon words, which cannot be reproduced in English. Luther's translation renders it, *Glaubet ihr nicht, so bleibt ihr nicht*.

moting rebellion among the little states of the Westland. Egypt by this time had ceased to be an effective force in the politics of western Asia. No Egyptian army in Isaiah's time advanced more than a few leagues beyond its own frontier. Isaiah's satiric designation of Egypt as a nation "whose strength is to sit still" was entirely justified by the facts. Yet Egypt repeatedly was able by promises of help to incite some of the Palestinian states to revolt.

Between 713 and 711, for example, the western states made a concerted attempt to revolt against Assyria. As we learn from Sargon's own records the confederacy was composed of Egypt, Ashdod, Edom, Moab and Judah. Isaiah's attitude at this crisis, as shown in Chapters XX and XIV:29-32, was one of opposition to the whole movement. Once having accepted the position of vassalage to Assyria, Isaiah believed Judah should remain faithful to its agreement. Revolt against Assyria, Isaiah regarded as revolt against God, whose plans for Israel and the world involved the success of that proud empire. Moreover, Isaiah believed that an alliance with the worshipers of strange gods implied distrust of Yahveh's power, and a recognition of the claims of his rivals. The issue of events amply vindicated the wisdom of Isaiah's counsel, the immediate effect of which was to make Judah hold aloof from the coalition (Is. XX).

Once more Isaiah influenced the counsels of state. Sargon died in 705 and Sennacherib, his son, succeeded him. To the vassal states of the Westland the time for revolt seemed opportune. To Jerusalem came ambassadors from Merodach-baladan, who had seized the throne of Babylon and held it against Sennacherib (Is. XXXIX) from Philistia (Is. XIV:

28 ff) and from Egypt (Is. XVIII)—all urging Judah's participation in revolt against the hated Assyrians.

Though Isaiah tried to induce Hezekiah and his advisers to remain loyal to Assyria, predicting the utter failure of the whole enterprise, he was unable to prevent Judah's joining the confederacy, and Hezekiah, with all the small rulers of the neighboring lands, openly rebelled against Assyria. The outcome is recorded both by the Old Testament and by Sennacherib. After subduing Babylon, he marched westward and attacked and subjugated first Phœnicia, then in succession Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Philistia. Then, after defeating a relieving Egyptian army at Eltekeh, he attacked Judah, capturing forty-six of its small towns and fortresses, and exacting a heavy tribute from Hezekiah. The Assyrians did not, however, enter the sacred city. Jerusalem itself escaped pillage because of a pestilence that decimated the Assyrian army, and caused Sennacherib to return to Nineveh, leaving his conquest of Judah incomplete.

It is in connection with the events of this third crisis that Isaiah formulated two of his most important contributions to Hebrew prophetic thinking—the doctrine of the remnant, and that of the inviolability of Mount Zion. The doctrine of the remnant was Isaiah's attempt to reconcile his conception of God's justice with that of his mercy. On the one hand, there were Judah's sins calling aloud for judgment, but on the other hand Isaiah could not conceive of Yahveh's plans for the world as being capable of fulfillment unless a part of the people, the "holy seed" or spiritual kernel of the nation, should survive the judgment, and become the germ of the ideal people of God. This idea of

the "Remnant" seems to have come very early in the prophet's ministry, for it is embodied in the name of a son, Shear-Jashub (Remnant shall turn), who must have been born to the prophet very soon after his inaugural vision, but it persists all through his teaching, and is applied to every situation the prophet met.

The other idea, that of the inviolability of Mount Zion, is more distinctively a product of Isaiah's third period, though it is very closely connected with the earlier idea of the remnant. Isaiah believed that the city of Jerusalem as the seat of Yahveh's sanctuary would be spared in the impending punishment, and that it would become a refuge for those who were to be saved from the wreck of the national life. In contrast to Amos, Hosea, and his contemporary Micah, to all of whom the life of cities seemed horrible, and who thought of the golden age of the past as the (imaginary) life of the desert, and that of the future as a time of simple pastoral and agricultural existence, Isaiah saw the promise of the future in the city. He has lost all longing for the nomad life of the desert. To him the past golden age is the reign of David in the city of Jerusalem:

How is the faithful city become a harlot!  
It was full of judgment,  
Righteousness lodged in it;  
But now—murderers.

I: 21.

The same thought is expressed in his picture of the future:

I will restore thy judges as at the first,  
And thy counsellors as at the beginning.

Afterward thou shalt be called, the City of Righteousness.  
The Faithful City.

I: 26.

"Both Isaiah and Micah condemn the moral evils of the time; but Micah sees the city as the source of the evil, while Isaiah recognizes in it the promise of the coming good."<sup>10a</sup>

The greatest accomplishment of Isaiah was that of making Jerusalem conscious of her destiny. All round the Mediterranean cities were coming into existence and playing their rôles in history. They trained free citizens, and developed art and letters; but beyond a vague tradition of freedom and capacity, they bequeathed a comparatively slight heritage to the future. Tyre is a case in point. Tyre was the greatest trading center, and consequently became one of the richest cities of the ancient world, but aside from international trade, which it taught to the Romans, and they in turn to the modern world, we owe it little. We are probably therefore somewhat richer, but little the wiser or better for anything Tyre accomplished. With Jerusalem it was different. Because Isaiah held before her an ideal, which in that day she only feebly expressed, Jerusalem became self-conscious, and accepted as the destiny God had given her to accomplish that of becoming "the Holy City"—the place chosen by Yahveh to demonstrate an ethical ideal. Toward that goal every idealist in Jerusalem set his face, and though they never attained it, the very attempt marks her out through all the ages as being in the words of her prophet poet, "The joy of the whole earth."

Isaiah did not analyze the underlying causes of

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<sup>10a</sup> Todd, *Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel*, p. 178.



the evils of his day so acutely as did Hosea. His conception of the ideal state was influenced by his conservative and aristocratic birth and training. Yet he was the first to set forth certain fundamental social principles. He was the first to condemn the selfish monopoly of natural resources. He also was the first to point out the injustice and peril of class legislation (X:1-2). He also started the first recorded temperance crusade, basing his arguments against insobriety upon the same social and economic grounds as those appealed to by modern reformers. His most memorable contribution to the world's thought was, however, his conception of world history as an ordered progress, guided by a holy God, and having for its culmination the establishment of a theocracy, or kingdom of God on earth.

The Book of Isaiah as it stands in our Bibles is a prophetic miscellany. The earliest reference to it in its present form is found in the apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus (XLVIII:23-25), where it is said that Isaiah "comforted them that mourned in Zion." This obviously refers to the opening lines of the fortieth chapter. We now recognize chapters forty to sixty-six as belonging to a period about two centuries later than the time of Isaiah, the son of Amoz. Leaving out of consideration for the present, therefore, the last twenty-seven chapters of the Book as we have it, and confining our attention to the first thirty-nine chapters, we find these to be a collection of prophecies mostly of uncertain date, some being of the time of Isaiah, others having no reference to his age. There is (1) an introductory prophecy of uncertain date, but embodying many of Isaiah's characteristic ideas; (2) a series of moral and political discourses concerning Judah and Jerusalem (II:1



—XI:9—Isaiah's with interpolations); (3) an appendix to the above (XI:10—XIV:23—not Isaiah's); (4) a group of oracles against foreign nations (XIV:24—XXIII:18—some of these are Isaiah's); (5) a second appendix (XXIV—XXVII—not wholly Isaiah's); (6) a group of warnings and consolations to Jerusalem (XXVIII—XXXII—Isaiah's with a few interpolations); (7) a third appendix (XXXIII—XXXV—not Isaiah's); (8) historical conclusion (XXXVI—XXXIX) stories about Isaiah mostly from II Kings.

The book undoubtedly grew slowly, combined from several collections of Isaiah's sermons, each with its appendix of other prophetic fragments, to which Chapter I was later prefixed. The book is thus seen to be fragmentary, not chronologically arranged, and by no means entirely the work of Isaiah.

The passages that may with certainty be attributed to him possess a distinctive style. What Matthew Arnold says of Homer's style would apply equally well to Isaiah's, for it has the qualities of plainness of thought, plainness of style, nobleness, and rapidity, which Arnold attributes to the Greek. It is an oratorical style full of pith and pungency. Perhaps its most striking peculiarity is its compression, which, however, does not result in obscurity. Much of the effect of this is of course lost in the translation which fails to reproduce, for example, in XXIX:16 the terse vigor of the Hebrew, where the one word *haphk'kem* represents five words in the English, "Ye turn things upside down." Similarly the English translation fails to reproduce the assonances which are another noticeable feature of Isaiah's style. In V:7, a passage in which the prophet assumes the rôle of a minstrel, and tries to enlist attention by the lively measures of a love song, he

ends with two couplets intended to point the moral in a way that would be emphatic and easily remembered:

He looked for justice (*mishpāt*), but behold bloodshed  
     (*misphāh*);  
 For righteousness (*cēdāqāh*), but behold a cry (*ce'āqāh*).

These plays upon words, though a rather marked feature of Isaiah's style, are really used sparingly, and never without telling oratorical effect. They certainly do not sound playful. Even the occasional flashes of humor in Isaiah's oracles produce no effect of playfulness. A good example is to be found in the seventh chapter (v. 20). Ahaz in opposition to Isaiah's advice had hired at great expense the king of Assyria to defend him against the kings of Syria and Israel. This Isaiah satirically refers to as the hiring of a foreign razor, and adds threateningly:

In that day will Yahveh shave with a razor that is hired in the parts beyond the River, even with the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard.

The meaning, of course, is "You may hire the razor, but God will give you a close shave from head to foot, even cutting off the beard"—which to an ancient oriental meant a degradation complete and shameful.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Another striking illustration of Isaiah's satiric humor is furnished by his catalog of the finery of the daughters of Jerusalem in Chapter III, all of which they must soon exchange for the shameful garb of slaves. "Instead of artificial curls, there will be baldness, instead of a girdle, a rope, instead of a mantle, a girding of sackcloth, branding instead of beauty."

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Since Isaiah I-XXXIX is a miscellany, the following outline lists only the passages which are universally attributed to Isaiah and which can be dated with some certainty:

- I. Before the Syro-Ephraimitic War (740-735).
  - A. Isaiah's call to prophesy, VI.
  - B. The three Jerusalems, II—IV.
    1. The ideal city, II:1-5.
    2. The real city, II:6—IV:1.
      - a. (Note especially the satiric description of the women of Jerusalem, III:16-24).
    3. The purified city, IV:2-6.
  - C. The great arraignment, I.
  - D. The Vineyard of Yahveh, a parable, V:1-24.
  - E. The anger of the Lord against human pride, IX:8—X:4; V:25-30.
- II. During and just after the Syro-Ephraimitic War (735-732).
  - A. Isaiah's appeal to Ahaz, VII:1-25 (about 735).
  - B. His appeal to the people, VIII:19—IX:7.
  - C. Damascus about to fall, XVII:1-11 (732).
- III. During Assyrian Supremacy (734-705).
  - A. On the Philistines, XIV:28-32.
  - B. Isaiah's warning, XX.
  - C. Appeals in behalf of a policy of neutrality, XXVIII—XXXII.
    1. (Note especially the preaching of the doctrine of the inviolability of Mount Zion, XXIX:1-8).

- IV. During the revolt from Assyria (705-701).
- A. Judgment on the world power Assyria, X: 5-34 (704).
  - B. Smitten Foes, XIV:24-27.
  - C. To the Ethiopian Ambassadors, XVIII.
  - D. The inexpiable sin of Jerusalem, XXII: 1-14.
  - E. Against an influential politician, XXII: 15-25.
  - F. The dissolute nobles of Jerusalem, XXVIII:14-29.
  - G. A Messianic forecast, XXIX:15-24.
  - H. The Egyptian Alliance, XXX:1-17.
  - I. Failure of human help, the divine protection, XXXI.
  - J. To the women of Jerusalem, XXXII: 9-20.
  - K. Jerusalem to be delivered, XXXIII.
  - L. The great deliverance, XXXVII:22-25 (an historical excerpt not written by Isaiah).

#### SUGGESTED READING ON ISAIAH

- Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 100-120.
- Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 65-70.
- Cornill, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, pp. 262-284.
- Duff, *Theology and Ethics of the Ancient Hebrews*, pp. 79-110.
- Fairweather, *Pre-Exilic Prophets*, pp. 51-56.
- Gray, G. B., *Isaiah* (in "International Critical Commentary").
- Kirkpatrick, *Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 143-264.

McFadyen, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 111-128.

Sanders and Kent, *Messages to the Earlier Prophets*, pp. 133-169.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 158-168.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 22-28.

Skinner, *Isaiah* (Cambridge Bible), pp. LXVII, ff.

Smith, G. A., *Isaiah* (Expositor's Bible), pp. 91-102.

Todd, *Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel*, pp. 172-186.

### QUESTIONS ON ISAIAH

What are the known facts of Isaiah's life?

With what historical crises was his work connected?

What was the political policy he advocated? Was it a wise policy? (*Cf.* that of Switzerland in the World War.) In connection with the crisis of 701 B.C. read Psalms XLVI, XLVII, XLVIII, which commemorate the deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib. Read also in connection with this, Byron's poem, "The Assyrian Came Down."

What characteristic idea of the prophecy is suggested by Isaiah's warning to Ahaz (VII:9 *cf.* XXVIII:16 and XXX:15)?

What other important contributions did Isaiah make to the world's stock of moral ideas, *e.g.*, in relation to (a) God; (b) worship; (c) relation of morals to religion; (d) relation of sin and suffering?

What was his conception of the future golden age?

By what symbol does he describe the relation of Assyria to Israel?

Comment upon his ideas of the inviolability of Mount Zion.

What was his philosophy of history, namely his theory of Israel's relation to world history?

Mention some literary characteristics of Isaiah's shown, for example, in Chapter VI.

Make a list of Isaiah's characteristic ideas.

What do you think of Isaiah's command of sarcasm as shown, for example, in Chapter III and in Chapters XXIX—XXXII?

Notice Isaiah's fondness for punning, *e.g.*, in VII:9. Does this sound flippant?

Name as many as you can of Isaiah's stylistic peculiarities. Show that Matthew Arnold's characterization of Homer's style, as possessing the qualities of plainness of thought, plainness of style, nobleness and rapidity apply also to Isaiah's. Select passages illustrative of each of these qualities.

## CHAPTER VI

### MICAH THE DEMOCRAT

WHILE Isaiah the statesman prophet was active in Jerusalem, Micah, another peasant prophet like Amos, and like him a social reformer, was preaching in the Shephelah or low hills on the western border of Judea near the Philistine frontier. His home, Maresha, was just above the Philistine plain, not much over twenty miles west of Amos's home at Tekoa, and about twenty-seven miles southwest of Jerusalem. This region had apparently been colonized by Jews during the strong reign of Uzziah, when the borders of Judah had been pushed westward. It was the part of Palestine most exposed to the attacks of invading armies both from Assyria and Egypt, for they always approached Judah from the coast plain (the plain of Sharon) that skirted the eastern Mediterranean. Probably the immediate occasion of Micah's prophecy was the approach of Sennacherib's army in 701 B. C., which came up through the western valleys of Judah capturing forty-six towns and villages, and threatening even Jerusalem itself. To Micah, the peasant, the devastating march of the Assyrians symbolizes the wrath of Yahveh poured out upon Judah in punishment for the crimes of the capital, for to him, as to Amos, the corrupt life of the city seemed an affront to Deity:

For the transgression of Jacob is all this,  
And for the sins of the house of Israel.



What is the transgression of Jacob?

Is it not Samaria?

And what are the high places of Judah?

Are they not Jerusalem?

Mic. I: 5 *cf.* VII: 9-12.

Though Micah is a prophet of doom, he is at the same time a prophet of compassion, and the preceding denunciation is followed by a passage which is one of the most curious examples of passionate grief expressed in a series of plays upon words, the total effect of which is far removed from playfulness. Here the prophet, imagining an approach of the Assyrians through the villages of the Shephelah, takes the names of town after town chiefly in the neighborhood of his own native village, and extorts from the meaning of their names, or even from their sounds, an omen of mourning and woe.

In Gath (Tell-town) tell it not!

In Akko (Weep-town) weep not!

In Beth-le-Aphrah (Dust-town) roll thyself in dust.

Pass by, thou inhabitress of Shaphir (Fair-town) in nakedness and shame!

The citizen of Zaanan (March-town) marched not forth.

The mourning of Bethazel (Neighbor-town) taketh from you its standing place.

The inhabitress of Maroth (Bitter-town) is in travail about good.

Because evil hath come down from Yahveh to the gate of Jerusalem

Bind the chariot to the swift horse, thou inhabitress of Lachish (Horse-town)

She was the beginning of sin for the daughter of Zion,

For the transgressions of Israel were found in thee

Therefore wilt thou (O Zion) give dismissal (farewell presents) to Moresheth-Gath (The Possession of Gath)

The houses of Achzib (False-spring) became Achzab (a disappointing brook) to Israel's kings.

Yet will I bring the heir (namely Sargon, king of Assyria) to thee, thou citizen of Maresha (Heir-town).

Unto Adullam (the wild beast's cave) shall the glory of  
Israel come!  
Make thyself bald (O Zion) for the children of thy de-  
light,  
Enlarge thy baldness as the vulture,  
For they are gone into captivity from thee.<sup>12</sup>

Such a *tour de force* of paronomasia is likely to appeal to a modern reader as lacking in dignity, or even as inexcusably flippant. We need to remember, however, that the Greek tragic dramatists often used plays upon words in passages of grave and solemn import, and that our own Shakespeare did the same thing.<sup>13</sup> The last of the great poets to pun in serious mood was Milton. When Satan enters Eden,

Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt,  
At one slight bound high overleaped all bound  
Of hill or highest wall.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to Isaiah, who speaks of the evils of his time from the social level of the rich and oppressive rulers, and from the urban standpoint, Micah speaks from the standpoint of the common people, and the point of view is that of the outlying rural districts where the oppression of the poor, the perversion of justice through bribery and the corruption of religion, are seen from beneath, and are felt most acutely. Isaiah had heard the call to Yahveh's service in a vision of his kingly majesty that ennobled all he said and did; Micah heard the voice

<sup>12</sup> I: 10-16. The translation is that of Canon Farrar in *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 130, 131.

<sup>13</sup> When Richard II visits John of Gaunt upon his death-bed, and addresses him as "Old Gaunt," the Duke answers, "Old Gaunt, indeed, and gaunt is being old."

<sup>14</sup> *Par. Lost IV*: 181, 182.

of God in the sufferings of his hapless neighbors. And this colored his whole thought as a prophet. What stirred him most was the injustice under which his fellows labored. Throughout, he is thoroughly democratic in his sympathies and interests.

Isaiah had touched, among many others, the land question. This Micah stressed much more, as the most vital element in the social problem, affirming that the land grabbers who coveted fields and seized them, oppressing a man and his heritage, were the most dangerous enemies of Judah. The figure, Dantesquely terrible, which he uses to describe the rapacity of the oppressors of the poor, is cannibalism:

Ye who hate the good and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron.  
III: 1-3.

He arraigns the leaders of the corrupt commercial city because they have perverted justice, and have added to injustice hypocrisy, and a false trust in Yahveh:

Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: Yet they lean upon Yahveh, and say, Is not Yahveh in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us.

III: 9-11.

For crimes like these he declares :

Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

III: 12.

This was, of course, in direct contradiction to Isaiah's doctrine of the inviolability of Mount Zion.

History proved Micah rather than Isaiah to have been correct, for, though Jerusalem escaped capture in the Assyrian invasion of 701 B. C., the destruction of the city was only deferred. In 586 B. C. the temple was looted and burnt, together with the royal palace; and much of the city (II Kings XXV: 9, 13-17); the walls were demolished (XXV:10), and Jerusalem made a ruin. Such a difference as this between Isaiah and Micah does not mean, however, that theirs were discordant voices. It merely exemplifies the independence of the prophets, and the fact that they looked upon the world of their day from different viewpoints. Isaiah, intent upon the building up of the kingdom of God in Israel, could not think of Jerusalem as otherwise than inviolable till that kingdom was established. Micah believed that the kingdom of God was not to be identified with any city, but that it would be established, if at all, in the righteous citizenship of Israel—that body of simple, God-fearing men and women who were trying to do right. One wonders whether the peasant prophet's idea of the kingdom of God was not nearer to the idea of the greater prophet of a later time, who said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say Lo here! or there! for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you" (Lk. XVII:21).

Scholars are inclined to credit to Micah only the

first three chapters of the book that bears his name. Chapters IV and V do certainly resemble both in form and thought the Jewish writings of a much later age. Chapters VI and VII also, it is thought, could not have been written until after 685 B. C., when Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah. They clearly reflect a time of religious reaction against the prophets, when the statutes of Omri were kept and all the works of the house of Ahab (VI:16), when the prince asked for a reward (VII:3), and when one could not trust in neighbor, friend, or wife (VII:5), and such was the reign of Manasseh. Even though these chapters cannot with certainty be attributed to Micah, they are of the greatest interest if for no other reason than because they contain the finest summary of prophetic teaching about religion in all prophecy. The eighth verse of Chapter VI contains what is undoubtedly the noblest affirmation of Hebrew prophecy. It is the prophet's reply to the eager question of the penitent people who ask whether it will suffice for them to offer their first-born in sacrifice for their sin: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Here we find combined the essential teachings of all the prophets who had gone before. Amos had laid stress upon the necessity of righteousness, and Micah exhorts men to "do justly." Hosea had preached the necessity of love; and here Micah insists upon loving-kindness as one of the three fundamentals of religion. Isaiah had emphasized the need of humble faith; and Micah demands a lowly walk with God as a primary religious virtue. Thus Micah embodies the great ethical ideas of his predecessors, combining justice, love and humble faith in one sum-

mary of religious duty. The requirements of religion were never better stated. Israel's teachers of a later day could do little more than to reiterate what Micah had already said. "True religion before God and the Father is this," said the Apostle James, "to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." Nor has anyone in all the Christian centuries been able to formulate a better statement. Justice between man and man, charity, and humble-hearted faith are still the sum total of God's requirements. Speaking of this passage, Huxley, the scientist, said of it, "A perfect ideal of religion! A conception of religion which appears to me as wonderful an inspiration of genius as the art of Phidias or the science of Aristotle!" That it has come to be recognized pretty generally as a thoroughly adequate statement of moral duty is attested by the fact that it is sung on every Good Friday to the music composed by Palestrina as an improperia in the Sistine chapel at Rome, and that today it is inscribed as a summary of religion in the Congressional Library at Washington. To have synthesized the older truths of prophecy, and to have made them new and vital forces in human history certainly entitles this prophet, whether Micah or a later anonymous one, to a high place among the immortal teachers of mankind.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF MICAHA

- I. Doom of Samaria and Jerusalem, I:2-III.
  - A. Advent of Yahveh in judgment, I:2-16.
  - B. Social injustice and punishment, II:1-11.
  - C. Disconnected expressions of hope, II:12-13.

D. Sins of leaders of society (rulers, priests, and prophets), III.

II. Hope for the future, IV-V.

A. Restoration of Zion, IV:1-8.

B. Triumph over enemies, IV:9-V:1.

C. The future golden age, V:2-25.

III. A drama representing Israel's relations with Yahveh, VI-VII.

A. The court scene, the verdict given, VI:1-16.

B. The penitent confession, VII:1-10.

C. The prophet's epilogue—an expression of hope, VII:11-20.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON MICAH

Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 117-120.

Encyclopedia Biblica, Vol. III, Article, "Micah."

Farrar, *Minor Prophets*, pp. 129-140.

Orelli, *Twelve Minor Prophets*, pp. 185-222.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 22-28.

Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. I, pp. 357-438.

Smith, W. R., *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 279-316.

#### QUESTIONS ON MICAH

Who was Micah? Where did he live and work?

What contrasts are evident between Isaiah and Micah in respect to

(a) social position?

(b) attitude toward the life of their time, particularly city life?

(c) their teaching?



What other Eighth Century prophet does Micah most resemble?

What did Micah regard as the most vital element of the social problem?

What do you think of the summary of religious duty contained in Mic. VI:8? Compare it with the statement found in Jas. 1:27 and that of Jesus in Matt. XXII:37-39. Show that this statement summarizes the teaching of all the Eighth Century prophets. What were the effects of Micah's preaching?

In connection with Micah VI:8 read Whittier's poem, "Requirement," as an illustration of the effect the book has had upon modern thinking.

## CHAPTER VII

### IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF MICAH-HEZEKIAH'S REFORMATION. MANASSEH AND DEUTERONOMY

MICAH was the only one of the Eighth Century prophets whose work was immediately effective. A reference in Jeremiah (XXVI:19) indicates that Hezekiah's reformation, described in II Kings XVIII:4ff. was directly due to Micah. In the course of this, Hezekiah removed the high places, cut down the *asherah*, and destroyed the brazen serpent which had been regarded for centuries as sacred, affirming that it was only "a piece of brass" (*Nehushtan*). He also seems to have made an attempt to centralize worship in Jerusalem (II Kings XVIII:22). Hezekiah's reformation, however, shared the fate of all such attempts to reform society by governmental decree. It was short-lived.

The following reign, that of Manasseh ben Hezekiah, was one of reaction and spiritual decadence, being characterized by an active persecution of the prophets, and by a complete repudiation of their teachings.

Such a reaction can easily be accounted for. It was wholly a conservative movement—a revival of the older popular religion in opposition to the reforms proposed and inaugurated by Hezekiah under the influence of the Eighth Century prophets. If the new God whom the prophets preached (for such he must have appeared to the people) had made Judah independent of Assyria, the reaction might

not have occurred; but Judah remained an Assyrian province and had to pay a heavy tribute annually. In this humiliation the people saw indisputable proof that Yahveh was angry at the neglect of his wonted service. As a result, the old popular religion was restored to favor. All that Hezekiah had destroyed was restored, the high places were rebuilt, the Canaanitish agricultural shrines reopened, and the image worship against which Hosea had protested was renewed.

Moreover, since it appeared that the gods of Assyria were stronger than those of the peoples continuously subject to it, the Assyrio-Babylonian star worship was introduced into the very courts of the Temple, and became so popular that it was practiced on the housetops (Jer. XIX:13, Zeph. I:5), and in Tophet, in the valley of Hinnom, the altar of Moloch, the fire god, sent up its smoke. Manasseh himself is said to have sacrificed his eldest son to the "grisly king."

Naturally in a time such as this of reaction and persecution, the articulate voice of prophecy was mostly silent.<sup>15</sup> This, however, does not mean that the prophets were inactive. To the period of Manasseh's reign probably belongs the composition of the original Book of Deuteronomy.

This book has an interesting history. During the time of Manasseh it was concealed in the Temple, and was made public only in the later reign of Josiah, who organized and carried out a reform on the basis of it. The chief elements in this reform

<sup>15</sup> Many scholars believe that the brief fragment (Chap. VI, VII of Micah) with its splendid summary of prophetic teaching and its protest against child sacrifice, belongs to Manasseh's reign.

were the destruction of the shrines of other gods, and the centralization of the worship in Jerusalem, the things Deuteronomy alone among the codes emphasizes. There seems no doubt that the book found in the Temple in 621 B. C. was at least a part of our Book of Deuteronomy. The original book is usually considered to have included most, if not all, of Chapters XII to XXVI, XXVIII and perhaps Chapters V to XI, all of which form a unity.

The book was an attempt to rewrite the old laws and customs of the nation in the light of the teachings of the Eighth Century prophets. Naturally, it reemphasized certain basic principles of the earlier legislation.<sup>16</sup> At the beginning of the book we find the Decalogue repeated, and the author reasserting in unequivocal terms the religious basis of the state, and the unity of God.<sup>17</sup> Like the older codes, this, too, laid great emphasis upon the necessity of a sanction in the conscience of the people. Indeed this idea that obedience to law must be voluntary was, and continued to be, one of the unique features of Hebrew legislation. In contrast to the elaborate system of police, and courts, and penalties that we are accustomed to see employed for the enforcement of the law in modern Christendom, there was in ancient Israel comparatively little legal machinery. The lack of it was due to the Hebrew belief that the law was not something outside man, an injunction laid upon him from without; but that it was an objective presentation of man's own reason and sense of justice. By the author of Deuteronomy, God is represented as saying to Israel:

<sup>16</sup> The name is significant. It means the "second law," or the "second giving of the law."

<sup>17</sup> Deut. VI: 4; X: 17; cf. III: 24; IV: 35, 39.

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, and make us hear it, that we may do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. (XXX: 11-14).

That obedience to the law was not obligatory, but a matter of moral choice, is emphasized again and again. Once Moses is made to say:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse: wherefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed.<sup>18</sup>

Yet Deuteronomy was more than an emphatic reaffirmation of the fundamental principle of loyalty to Yahveh laid down in the covenant. It was a reformulation of an older legislation, and an adaptation of it, under prophetic influence, to new needs. It was an attempt to realize in practice the ideals of the Eighth Century prophets, to transform the nation, demoralized by the idolatry prevalent under Manasseh's rule, into a true theocracy; to awaken Judah to renewed love to God and man, which Hosea had declared to be the first of human duties. It is noticeable that the remarkable summary of the whole duty of man found in Deuteronomy V:12 is obviously borrowed almost verbatim from Micah's statement of the essentials of true religion, (Mic. VI:8) and hence embodies the essential teachings of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Nothing better illustrates the extent to which Deuteronomy reflects the spirit

<sup>18</sup> Deut. XXX: 19. See also, Kent, *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, pp. 140, 141.

of social justice awakened by the prophets of the Eighth Century<sup>19</sup> than the legislation regarding slaves.<sup>20</sup>

While there were in ancient Israel no restrictions in law or sentiment against the ownership of slaves, the duty of treating them humanely was insisted upon to a degree that would have seemed to a Greek or a Roman mere maudlin sentimentalism. Slaves in Israel were of two classes, Hebrew and non-Hebrew. A Hebrew might become a slave either voluntarily because of poverty, or involuntarily when the court sold him into slavery as a punishment for theft. Even in the latter case the sale must be a private one. A Hebrew could not be sold into bondage from an auction block nor even from the sidewalk where other slaves were sold.<sup>21</sup> When freed from service, the slave was entitled to a parting gift (Deut. XV:12-15) which must be, not money, but from the flock, the threshing floor, and the wine press.

Over non-Hebrew slaves also the control of the master was strictly limited. If a slave ran away, the Deuteronomic law forbade those with whom he had taken refuge to return him to his master (Deut. XV:12-15, 18).<sup>22</sup> Deuteronomy provided not only for the humane treatment of non-Hebrew

<sup>19</sup> It will be remembered that it was a prophet who first taught by an impressive object lesson the duty of treating humanely prisoners of war. See II Kings VI; cf. Deut. XXI: 10-14.

<sup>20</sup> See Deut. XV: 12-18; XXIII: 15 ff. XXIV: 14 ff.

<sup>21</sup> So said Maimonides quoted in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, article "Slavery."

<sup>22</sup> This is a marked contrast to the Roman law, which strictly forbade the harboring of fugitive slaves. A special class of persons known as *fugitavarii* made the pursuit and capture of runaway slaves a regular business. Florus III: 19.

slaves, but for their admittance under certain conditions to a share in the religious privileges of true Israelites. They were not required, any more than the Hebrews themselves, to work on the Sabbath. Indeed, the reason for the observance of the Sabbath as given in Deuteronomy is "that thy man servant and thy maid servant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt" (Deut. V:14, 15). This does not mean that he had to become a proselyte, for there is no mention of either baptism or sacrifice, which were also prerequisites to becoming a "child of the covenant." It is deeply significant of the spirit of tolerance that underlay the Deuteronomic legislation that in the command to observe the joyous festivals of Israel the slaves are expressly mentioned as included in the invitation to "rejoice before Yahveh" (Deut. XII:12).

Yet the spirit of altruism in the Deuteronomic legislation appears not alone in the laws regulating the treatment of slaves. Nowhere else in ancient legislation is the sacredness of human life emphasized to the same extent. Elsewhere we may look in vain for such a law as that of Deut. XXII:8 requiring that a man in building a house shall "make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house if any man fall from thence." Nor is there anywhere in other ancient legislation either theoretical or practical a regulation corresponding to the Deuteronomic law regarding homicide by an unknown person (Deut. XXI:1-9). This law, which is said to be the origin of the modern coroner's inquest, provided that when a man was found slain "in the field," the elders and judges should "measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain." Then by a solemn ritual the



elders of the nearest city were to purge their city of the murder, and solemnly to disavow their knowledge of the criminal. In the absence of newspapers, no better means could have been devised to give publicity to the crime, and to compel anyone knowing the facts to reveal them.

Nor was human life alone considered worthy of protection by the writers of Deuteronomy. "He that doth the ravens feed, yea, providently caters for the sparrow," was thought to require humane treatment of our poor relations, the animals. Consequently, the Hebrew was forbidden to "muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Deut. XXV:4). Humane societies are usually regarded as of modern origin. It is interesting, therefore, to find this national society for the prevention of cruelty to animals dating from the time of Josiah.

The book of Deuteronomy was an attempt to realize the prophetic hope of the kingdom of God on earth. Through a pure worship of God, and through righteousness and benevolence of social life, Israel was to become a real theocracy—a nation governed directly by the will of God. Though it failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was designed, though, by making a book the foundation of religion, it substituted the dead letter for the living revelation of God, it nevertheless merits the designation given it by Professor Cornill of "perhaps the most significant and momentous book that was ever written." In justification of his estimate Professor Cornill says:

The opposition of secular and sacred, of laity and clergy, of State and Church, the conception of a holy writ and of a divine inspiration, can be traced back in its last roots to the Deuteronomy of the year 621, together with the whole history of revealed religion down to the present time, in-

cluding not only Judaism but Christianity and Islam, who have simply borrowed these ideas from Judaism.<sup>23</sup>

That as a matter of fact Deuteronomy did indeed embody elements of permanent value for the ordering of human relations a backward glance at our own colonial history will amply prove. Three of the New England colonies—the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Connecticut Colony, and the New Haven Colony—rejected the English law of entail and primogeniture, and even trial by jury, as lacking Scriptural authority, and adopted the Hebrew laws “as they were delivered by Moses, and expounded in other parts of Scripture, so for as they are a fence to the moral law, and neither typical nor ceremonial, nor had reference to Canaan.”<sup>24</sup> Under the influence of the humanitarian spirit of Deuteronomy, the colonists reduced the number of crimes punishable by death, which at that time in England were thirty-one, to twelve.<sup>25</sup>

#### SUGGESTED READING ON DEUTERONOMY

Baldwin, E. C. *The Permanent Elements in the Hebrew Law*, *International Journal of Ethics*, April, 1913.

Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 80-90.

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 69-103.

Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 175-189.

<sup>23</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 89, 90.

<sup>24</sup> See the *New Haven Colony Records*, Vol. I, p. 191.

<sup>25</sup> For an account of American colonial adaptation of the Hebrew law see the author's article, “The Permanent Elements in the Hebrew Law,” *The International Journal of Ethics*, April 1913.

Margolis and Marx, *History of the Jewish People*, pp. 104-108.

Ottley, *A Short History of the Hebrews*, pp. 208-210.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 172-173, 178-182.

#### QUESTIONS ON DEUTERONOMY

Comment upon Hezekiah's reformation.

Narrate briefly the facts of the reaction against the prophets during the reign of Manasseh, and account for the reaction.

Recount the external history of the original Book of Deuteronomy.

What was the aim of the writers of the book? Describe its form.

Comment upon the Deuteronomic legislation regarding slaves.

What other laws express a new humanitarian spirit?

Comment on the use made of the Deuteronomic code by the early colonists of New England.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ZEPHANIAH, THE PROPHET OF THE DAY OF THE LORD

DURING the long reign of Manasseh, prophecy, denied for the most part its proper expression, had taken refuge in literature. It was the Scythian invasion that unstopped the mouth of prophecy. These hordes of marauders, Herodotus tells us,<sup>26</sup> crossed the passes of the Caucasus about 630 B. C. and invaded the kingdom of the Medes, defeated them in battle, and became masters of Asia for twenty-eight years, penetrating as far to the west and south as the borders of Egypt, whence they were turned back by bribes. This invasion, which almost shattered the mighty power of Assyria, shook the whole of Palestine into consternation. These savage horsemen did not penetrate into the hills of Judah, but they pillaged some of the Philistine cities, including Ascalon, and spread terror on every side. Herodotus tells of their drinking the blood of their enemies slain in battle, using skulls as drinking cups, and of their making themselves cloaks by sewing together the scalps of their vanquished foes.<sup>27</sup>

In this invasion the prophets saw the penal resources of an offended God. Once again the dark

<sup>26</sup> I: 103-106. On the history and customs of the Scythians. See also IV: 5-82.

<sup>27</sup> IV: 64, 65.

sacred North was seen to be full of the possibilities of doom. The exemption of Judah from the ravages of these dreaded foes was so remarkable as to produce a strong, though transient, desire for reformation, which found expression in the reforms of Josiah's reign, when the original Book of Deuteronomy was found in the Temple in the year 621. Another effect of the Scythian invasion was that of making the voice of prophecy again articulate.

The articulate voice of conscience awakened by the Scythian terror is Zephaniah. With true discernment medieval art portrayed him as the man with the lantern of the Lord searching out sinners for destruction.<sup>28</sup> The opening verse describes the Book as "The word of Yahveh which came unto Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah." The internal evidence, the contents of the Book itself, confirms this statement regarding the time of the prophet's activity, and the picture it draws of social and religious corruption suggests a date before the reforms of Josiah, *i.e.*, 639-621. Undoubtedly the Hezekiah mentioned is the king, and the genealogy of the prophet is given for the sake of introducing the name of his royal ancestor.

Zephaniah's theme is the coming day of the Lord. Amos had prophesied that it would be a day of darkness and judgment, when the sun would go down at noon (VIII:9) and when God would rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword (VII:9). Isaiah had pictured it as a day of earthquake and thunder, when God "shall rise to shake terribly the earth" (Is. II:19). To Zephaniah also

<sup>28</sup> This conception of Zephaniah is based on chapter I: 12.

the day of the Lord,<sup>29</sup> which is imminent, approaching swiftly, is to be a day of wrath and burning:

I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the face of the ground, saith the Lord.

I: 2, 3.

This passage at the beginning of the prophecy strikes the key note of the whole book. Again and again the prophet reiterates his grim menace:

The great day of Yahveh is near:

It is near and hasteth greatly!

Even the voice of the day of Yahveh

The mighty man crieth there bitterly.

That day is a day of wrath,

A day of trouble and distress,

A day of wasteness and desolation,

A day of darkness and gloominess.

A day of clouds and thick darkness,

A day of the trumpet and alarm

Against the fortified cities

And against the high battlements.

I: 14-16.

It is this passage whose terror inspired the most stately hymn of the medieval church—Thomas of Celano's which begins:

*Dies iræ, dies illa*

*Solvat sæclum in favilla*

*Teste David cum Sibylla*

*Tuba mirum spargens sonum*

*Per sepulchra regionum*

*Coget omnes ante thronum*

This is the hymn that Philip Schaff declared to

<sup>29</sup> The term "day of Yahveh" had come to be a standing designation among the prophets for the final manifestation of God to judge Israel and the world.

be the greatest song in the world. Lockhart says that Sir Walter Scott was murmuring its lines as he lay dying. Dr. Samuel Johnson could never repeat it, Mrs. Thrale said, without tears. It has been published in more than one hundred and thirty-seven modern English translations. Few other Latin productions can rival it in the number of English renderings, and no modern hymn book is complete without it. But no translation except the Latin requiem which is taken almost word for word from Zephaniah, has ever been able to render the dithyrambic lilt and solemn music of the Hebrew text, in which, as Cornill says,<sup>30</sup> the thunder of the last judgment seems to roll.

The permanent value of Zephaniah's message lies in his clear-cut analysis of the religious situation in his day, and his very definite declaration of the Divine attitude toward it. It was the time when practical reforms were being advocated by the prophetic party, and when Josiah, the young king, was about to try to carry out the prophetic program as outlined in the Deuteronomic legislation. All this Zephaniah ignores. In his vision of the future, Israel is to be a brand plucked from the burning—a very few weak and righteous are to be saved from the world conflagration, which is imminent. Unlike his predecessors, Zephaniah is not a reformer, but wholly a prophet of doom.

The doom is especially severe upon those who are "settled upon their lees,"<sup>31</sup> who say in their

<sup>30</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 76.

<sup>31</sup> The metaphor, as Geo. Adam Smith points out, (*Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, p. 52) is taken from the process of making wine. New wine, unless poured off the lees after only a limited time, becomes thick like syrup. The metaphor is used several times by the prophets. See, for example, Jer. XLVIII: 11.



hearts Yahveh doeth no good, and doeth no evil" (I:12)—namely, upon scepticism and listlessness. It is for these that Yahveh will "search Jerusalem with candles," and pour out upon them the vials of his wrath. Professor G. A. Smith remarks:<sup>32</sup>

Here is evidently the same public temper, which at all periods provokes alike the despair of the reformer, and the indignation of the prophet: the criminal apathy of the well-to-do classes sunk in ease and religious indifference. We have today the same class of obscure, nameless persons, who oppose their almost unconquerable inertia to every movement of reform, and are the drag upon all vital and progressive religion. The great causes of God and Humanity are not defeated by the hot assaults of the Devil, but by the slow crushing glacier-like mass of thousands and thousands of indifferent nobodies. God's causes are never destroyed by being blown up, but by being sat upon.

Aside from this recognition that the worst obstacle to reform is the listless scepticism of the people, Zephaniah offers little that is new in prophecy. He deals with the familiar theme—sin brings punishment. Yahveh will at last preserve a remnant of poor and humble folk, who will survive the day of the Lord. His distinction here is in the vivid presentation of the terrors of Yahveh's day, and in the fact that other nations than Judah are included in the discipline of God.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH

It is on the basis of God's threat of judgment, seen in the Scythian invasion, that Zephaniah urges reform. The Book falls into four parts:

- I. Judah and Jerusalem are to be punished for corrupt worship (I:4-6), social injustice (I:9) and for disbelief in a living God. In their

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

scepticism and indifference they say, "in their heart, Yahveh will neither do good nor evil."

- II. The doom of the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians and Assyrians (II).
- III. The doom of Jerusalem and of all the nations, with the deliverance of a purified remnant—"a humble and poor people" in Jerusalem (III:1-13).
- IV. A post-exilic lyric in the style of the Second Isaiah, celebrating the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and the Divine Presence in their midst (III:14-20).

#### SUGGESTED READING ON ZEPHANIAH

- Bennett and Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 253-254.  
 Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 76-77.  
 Fairweather, *Pre-Exilic Prophets*, pp. 75-80.  
 Farrar, *Minor Prophets*, pp. 153 ff.  
 Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 190-192.  
 Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 29-32.  
 Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 170-176.  
 Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, pp. 3-73.

#### QUESTIONS ON ZEPHANIAH

- What is the probable reason for the giving of the long genealogy of the prophet? (I:1).  
 What was the probable occasion of the prophecy?  
 Comment on the effect upon later Jewish and Christian thought of Zeph. I:14-18. Read in this connection Math. XXV:31-46, and the paraphrase of the medieval hymn based upon

Zephaniah. Such a paraphrase may be found in most modern hymn books.

A certain kinship has been remarked between the spirit of Zephaniah and that of a modern prophet—Carlyle. Can you see any resemblance between them?

What is Zephaniah's picture of the golden age following the purification of Judah?

## CHAPTER IX

### NAHUM, THE PATRIOT

ZEPHANIAH had predicted the imminent destruction of Assyria. In the second chapter he represents God as saying:

Then my hand will I stretch to the North  
And destroy Asshur;  
And Nineveh will I make a waste  
Dry as the desert.  
Herds shall lie down in her midst—  
All the beasts of the field,  
Both pelican and bittern,  
Shall lodge in her capitals;  
The owl shall hoot in the window,  
The raven on the doorstep.<sup>33</sup>

In 606, to the delirious joy of all the peoples who had suffered from its tyranny, Zephaniah's prediction was fulfilled. The Assyrian Empire fell before the repeated attacks of the Medes and the Chaldeans. So complete was the destruction of Nineveh, its capital, that when Xenophon in 401 B.C. marched past the site in his famous retreat, the very name of the city had been forgotten. The peasantry retained only a vague tradition of a city whose inhabitants Zeus had rendered senseless "and so it was taken."<sup>34</sup> At first glance, it seems difficult to account for the suddenness of the empire's collapse; but a moment's reflection makes it seem

<sup>33</sup> The Spirited translation of Chapter II: 13, 14 is taken from A. R. Gordon's *Prophets of the Old Testament*, p. 149.

<sup>34</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis* III, IV: 6.

natural enough. It was an empire built by the sword, which could be upheld only by the sword. But its wars of conquest had sapped its strength, and its cruel policy of deporting conquered peoples had filled it with a disloyal population. As a result, it stood as Rome did in her last days, like a tottering giant, ready to fall before any strong attack. No world empire was ever so universally hated as Assyria. Upon all the peoples of Western Asia the yoke of Assyria oppression had rested heavily. Says G. A. Smith:

"Their kings had been dragged from them and hung in cages about her gates. Their gods had lined the temples of her gods. Year by year they had sent her their heavy tribute, and the bearers came back with fresh tales of her rapacious insolence."

No wonder the news of her impending overthrow stirred men's hearts, and produced a universal exultation.

Of such acclamation the little Book of Nahum is an expression. Professor G. A. Smith calls it "a great At last!" as the hated empire is seen yielding to one after another of the cruelties of battle, siege, and pillage which for two hundred years it had inflicted upon other peoples.

The title heading of the Book reads, "Oracle of Nineveh, Book of the Vision of Nahum the Elkoshite." . . . Of the author nothing is known. Though his birthplace is mentioned in the heading, the location of it is uncertain. Probably he was of Judah, and a contemporary of Zephaniah and of Jeremiah. The date of the prophecy is between the overthrow of the Egyptian Thebes and the fall of Nineveh. The former has recently occurred,<sup>35</sup> and the latter is imminent, for the land of Assyria

is already invaded (III:13); her outlying fortresses are falling into the hands of the invaders as when the first-ripe figs are shaken from the fig trees, and fall into the mouth of the eater (III:12). The date of the prophecy, therefore, may be fixed as between the sack of No-Ammon, Egyptian Thebes, which it mentions, and the fall of Nineveh, which it predicts.

The book is made up of three odes. Of these the first is general—a theophany, in which God's power of overthrowing his enemies is affirmed.<sup>36</sup> The two following poems present an imaginary picture of the siege and capture of Nineveh by the Medes. The style is extraordinarily brilliant, swift, vivid, dramatic, realistic. The very language glows like a stream of lava pouring down a mountain side. We hear the crack of the whip, the rattle of chariot wheels, see the red shields and the scarlet dress of the besiegers,<sup>37</sup> the flash of the swords, and the glitter of the lances, the heaps of slain; and we watch the fugitives in their vain flight to the mountains, while their king and nobles sleep their last sleep amid the ruins of the plundered city:

Asleep are thy shepherds, O king of Assyria,  
Thy nobles do slumber;  
Thy people are strewn on the mountains,  
Without any to gather.  
There is no healing of thy wreck,  
Fatal thy wound!  
All who hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hand at thee.  
For upon whom hath not thy cruelty passed without ceasing.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> There is some doubt among scholars whether Nahum wrote Chapter I. Several believe it to be post-exilic; but no one has questioned its appropriateness as an introduction to the other two odes that follow.

<sup>37</sup> Bright red was the Medes' favorite color.

<sup>38</sup> The translation is that of Professor G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, p. 112.

Nothing in English literature compares with the dramatic vividness of the description of the siege and capture of Nineveh except Carlyle's account in his *History of the French Revolution* of the taking of the Bastille.

The prophet Nahum has generally been recognized as a gifted poet, but the praise of him has usually been qualified by pointing out that in Nahum prophecy is identified with national patriotism. As a matter of fact there is a striking absence in the Book of specific references to the people of Israel, Judah being referred to only once (I:15), and Yahveh of Hosts being mentioned twice in the same formula (II:13, III:5). Otherwise the author does not speak as a Jew, but as an embodiment of the outraged conscience of mankind. It is not, Professor G. A. Smith points out, as a Jew that he exults in Nineveh's approaching overthrow, but in the name of all the peoples of Western Asia: "Nineveh has sold peoples by her harlotries, and nations by her witchcraft; it is peoples that shall gaze upon her nakedness, and kingdoms upon her shame." Nahum saw clearly the truth that he who takes the sword shall perish by the sword, and that they who do not rule in righteousness shall perish from the earth—in other words, that moral forces must be reckoned with in the world's administration, that national wrongdoing will be followed by national punishment as inevitably as the night follows the day, because such a sequence is part of the moral order of the world. The world's kingdoms built on the foundation of force and fraud are destined to certain destruction, because tyranny is suicide. Such is the idea that underlies Nahum's taunt-song over doomed Assyria.



## ANALYSIS OF BOOK OF NAHUM

- I. Title, I:1.
- II. God's character makes certain his destruction of the wicked and his preservation of his people, I:2-15 and II:2.
- III. The destruction of Nineveh is at hand, II:1 and 3-13.
- IV. Nineveh, the bloody city, III:1-19.

## SUGGESTED READING ON NAHUM

- Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 334-337.
- Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 186-187.
- Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 35-36.
- Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, pp. 98-108.

## QUESTIONS ON NAHUM

- What makes Nahum's prophecy more than merely an exultant outburst of patriotism?
- How and when did the fall of Nineveh actually occur?
- Note the vividness of the picture of the siege and capture of the city.
- What does he call Nineveh? (II:6-13).
- Read the description of the city in G. A. Smith's *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, pp. 98-101.
- What have been the relations of Assyria to Israel and Judah?

## CHAPTER X

### HABAKKUK THE PROPHET AS SCEPTIC

THE Book of Habakkuk marks the beginning of philosophic speculation in Israel, but the philosophic problem discussed is not abstract nor detached from the life of the day. On the contrary, it was suggested by a definite historical situation. The battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C., in which the Babylonians decisively defeated the Egyptians, definitely settled the question of the overlordship of western Asia for several decades in favor of the Chaldeans. The relation of the Chaldean power to Judah's discipline is the subject of the little Book of Habakkuk.

In the approaching fall of Nineveh, Nahum had foreseen the triumph of righteousness over sin—a convincing illustration of the truth that they who do not rule in righteousness shall perish from the earth. Nineveh had fallen in 606, but the Chaldean rule which followed proved no less ruthlessly tyrannical than that of Assyria.

Nor had the domestic situation in Judah improved. The good king, Josiah, had died in 609, and the kings that followed were men of a different stamp. Selfishness and injustice ruled in high places, and the prophetic party lost its influence at court. To many pious and thoughtful men it seemed as if wickedness was after all triumphant, and as if the righteous must suffer with what patience they could summon.

Of this condition the prophet complains in the beginning, asserting that wickedness is running riot

everywhere, that Yahveh knows the situation, and yet fails to deliver the righteous from their troubles.

In answer to the protest, Yahveh speaks, declaring that he is using the Chaldeans to punish the sins of Judah. This, however, only deepens the prophet's perplexity. While admitting that the wicked in Judah deserve punishment, he believes that even the worst of them are better than the Chaldeans. How is it, he asks, that Yahveh who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity can use the worse to punish the better? Is the insolent Chaldean to be allowed forever to go on defying God and man? Having asked this daring question, the prophet represents himself as taking his stand upon his watchtower and waiting for the answer that must come.

Nor is the answer long in coming. It is introduced impressively. Yahveh bids the prophet write the vision so clearly that the traveler may read it as he hurries past; and, with the further assurance that the fulfilment is not to be long deferred, the content of the vision is revealed:

Behold swollen, not level, is his soul within him,  
But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.

II: 4.

The meaning of the epigram is obvious. Habakkuk means that the soul of the wicked is diseased, carrying within it the poison of its own ultimate death; but the righteous shall endure by his steadfastness. The fact that the Hebrew word *emunah* is wrongly translated "faith" in the Septuagint, or Greek version, and that Saint Paul applies the term to the act by which the sinner secures forgiveness, and that both the authorized and revised versions mistranslate it, has obscured the meaning. As used in the Old Testament the word does not mean faith in a narrow religious sense merely, though it in-

cludes that; but rather the temper that faith produces of endurance, steadfastness, integrity.<sup>39</sup> The prophet's statement might be paraphrased: Let the righteous, however perplexed and troubled by the apparent unmorality of God's rule of the world, hold on tenaciously to his loyalty to God, and he shall live.

At first glance it may seem that Habakkuk made no new contribution to the solution of the mystery why a just God allows his people to become the prey of a nation worse than they. He appears merely to restate the old opinion that righteousness must finally triumph and wickedness ultimately be overthrown. The significance of Habakkuk's position lies in the fact that he dared to raise the question of the moral government of the world at all. He is the first Hebrew, certainly, bold enough to question the doctrine which had become the orthodox opinion in Israel.

This doctrine, as clearly stated in Deuteronomy (XII:28) and implied by the teaching of the Eighth Century prophets, was that if the commandments of God were kept, national prosperity was certain to follow. Habakkuk saw clearly that this dogma, though eminently satisfactory so long as things went well and normal conditions were maintained, would not stand the test of experience—that indeed it was

<sup>39</sup> The Hebrew word is derived from the verb meaning to be firm and as used in the Old Testament has various meanings, *e.g.*: steadiness (in a physical sense) Exod. XVII: 12; fidelity as between married people, Hos. II: 22; equity in judgment, Is. XI: 5; truthfulness, Prov. XII: 17; honesty or reliability, Prov. XII: 22; and the faithful discharge of duty in public office, II Chron. XIX: 9. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. X: 38) evidently employed the word in the sense in which Habakkuk used it, as meaning fidelity.

being refuted by the facts of life. The half century before the Exile brought upon Israel unparalleled suffering in spite of all she could do. There had been the invasion of Sennacherib in the reign of Hezekiah, who had instituted reforms; and, worse still, the death of Josiah at Migiddo, the king who had tried to make the prophetic dream of a theocracy come true. It was out of the perplexity caused by such seeming moral chaos that Habakkuk's challenge of God to demonstrate the justice of his administration came. In raising the question he became the forerunner of a long succession of thinkers upon this age-long problem—the problem of evil. He showed that it was possible to be an honest doubter—to be in a questioning frame of mind about some aspects of religion, and yet to be none the less religious.

Though Habakkuk did not solve the problem of evil, though indeed he made no important contribution to its solution, such as the author of Job later made, he did nevertheless set forth one of the great truths of life. This is contained in his assertion that "The righteous shall live by his faithfulness"—in other words, that righteousness is life. The importance of this assertion has not been overlooked. The very Talmudists<sup>40</sup> who declared that religious living consisted in keeping the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Mosaic law admitted that the author of the 15th Psalm had reduced those precepts to eleven and Isaiah to six (Is. XXXIII:15); and Micah to three (Mic. VI:8) and Amos to one (Amos V:4);<sup>41</sup> and that this one precept had been still more clearly set forth by Habakkuk in the declaration, "The just shall live by his faithfulness." It

<sup>40</sup> Makkoth f. 24a.

<sup>41</sup> "Seek ye me and ye shall live."

was a message that Israel took to heart. Through centuries of suffering, this nation of sorrows has stood firm, living by its faithfulness. Indeed, endurance has been the most obvious and by no means the least admirable trait of the Jewish race since Habakkuk's time. It is a quality worthy of emulation, and is the one that Saint Paul selects as the motto of Christianity. "The just," he says, "shall live by faith" (Heb. X:38). Here the word translated faith is the nearest Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word used by Habakkuk.

The structure of Habakkuk's little book is simple. There are three divisions. First: Chapter I:2 to II:5 which is in dramatic form; the prophet lifts his voice to God against the wrong and violence of which the world is full, and God sends him answer. Second: Chapter II:5-20, a taunt-song in a series of "Woes" upon the wrongdoers. Third: Chapter III, a prayer-psalm, descriptive of a theophany and expressive of Israel's faith in her God. Of these three sections, no one doubts the authenticity of the first; about the second, opinion is divided; and about the third there is pretty general agreement that it is a post-exilic liturgical hymn added to the Book by a late editor.

Even though not written by Habakkuk it is one of the most magnificent pieces of religious poetry in the world's literature, and has been the inspiration of some of the finest of our Christian hymns. It is called "A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, upon Shigionoth." The expression "upon Shigionoth" means in dithyrambics,<sup>42</sup> and might be rendered "to the music of psalms of ecstasy." In its intricate

<sup>42</sup> Plutarch describes dithyrambs as being "full of passion and change, with motions and agitations to and fro."

structure and its passionate exaltation of tone it has been compared to the Pindaric ode:

*Prelude*

O Lord, I have heard the report of thee, and am afraid;  
O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years,  
In the midst of the years make it known:  
In wrath remember mercy.

*Strophe*

God cometh from Teman,  
And the Holy One from Mount Paran.  
His glory covered the heavens,  
And the earth is full of his praise.  
And his brightness is as the light:  
He hath rays coming forth from his hand;  
And there is the hiding of his power.  
Before him goeth the pestilence,  
And fiery bolts go forth at his feet.  
He standeth and shaketh the earth;  
He beholdeth and driveth asunder the nations:  
And the eternal mountains are scattered,  
The everlasting hills do bow;  
His ways are everlasting.  
I see the tents of Cushan in affliction;  
The curtains of the land of Midian do tremble.

*Antistrophe*

Is the lord displeased against the rivers?  
Is thine anger against the rivers, or thy wrath against the  
    sea,  
That thou dost ride upon thine horses,  
Upon thy chariots of salvation?  
Thy bow is made quite bare;  
Sworn are the chastisements of thy word.  
Thou dost cleave the earth with rivers;  
The mountains see thee and are afraid;  
The tempest of waters passeth by;  
The deep uttereth his voice,  
And lifteth up his hands on high;  
The sun and moon stand still in their habitation



At the light of thine arrows as they go,  
At the shining of thy glittering spear.  
Thou dost march through the land in indignation,  
Thou dost thresh the nations in anger.

*Epode*

Thou art come for the salvation of thy people,  
For the salvation of thine anointed;  
Thou dost smite off the head from the house of the wicked.  
Laying bare the foundations even unto the neck.  
Thou dost pierce with his own staves the head of his warriors;  
(They came as a whirlwind to scatter me,  
Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly;)  
Thou dost tread the sea with thine horses, the surge of  
mighty waters.

*Postlude*

I heard and my belly trembled,  
My lips quivered at the voice;  
Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in my  
place:  
That I should rest waiting for the day of trouble,  
When he that shall invade them in troops cometh up against  
the people.  
For though the fig tree shall not blossom,  
Neither shall fruit be in the vines;  
The labor of the olive shall fail,  
And the fields shall yield no meat;  
The flock shall be cut off from the fold,  
And there shall be no herd in the stalls:  
Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
Yahveh, the Lord, is my strength,  
And he maketh my feet like hinds' feet,  
And will make me to walk upon mine high places.<sup>43</sup>

To realize the high poetic quality of this poem one has but to study the figurative language. Take for example the second half of verse 10:

<sup>43</sup> Hab. III. The strophic arrangement is that of Professor Moulton in *The Modern Reader's Bible*.

The deep uttereth his voice  
And lifteth up his hands on high.

There is in the world's poetry no more impressive personification than this of the sea, whose roar is the voice of acclamation, and who lifts up in the attitude of prayer<sup>44</sup> the white hands of its foam-capped waves before its creator coming to judge the earth.

This striking personification suggests a peculiarity in the Hebrew treatment of Nature which deserves mention. The Hebrew appreciation of natural beauty was more inclusive than that of other ancient peoples. It was certainly far more catholic than that of the Greeks. Though within certain well-defined limits the Greek enjoyment of nature was intense, outside those limits, Nature was to him an object of distrust. She then became Calypso, the Concealer, and Circe the Sorceress. Nature to the Greek emphasized her beauty and kept her terrors in the background. But the fact that the vast and awful forces of Nature were kept in the background, while the emphasis was put persistently upon her kindly aspects, resulted in a limitation of the range of the Greek's appreciation. As a result, only the cultivated landscape appealed to him as beautiful. Only once in all classical Greek literature (in the *Critias* of Plato) are mountains spoken of explicitly as beautiful. Ruskin in *Modern Painters* has noted the fact that every Homeric landscape intended to be beautiful is composed of a spring, a meadow and a grove. Rivers are sometimes spoken of by the Greek poets as beautiful; but the adjective was applied only to gently flowing streams

<sup>44</sup> The favorite attitude of prayer in Israel was a standing one with the hands raised, palms upward, as if about to receive a blessing.

regarded as distributors of fertility. Turbulent rivers had for the Greek no beauty; to him they suggested only anger and strength. Thus we find Homer using the ravages of a swollen river as a symbol of destructive force. Somewhat so it was with the Greek feeling for the sea. The majesty and loveliness of the sea the Greek delighted to portray, but its somber moods repelled and frightened him. It was his fear that caused him to adopt the principle of euphemism. The, Black Sea, for example, they called ὁ πόντος Ἀξείνος, the inhospitable sea, on account of its storms. This name they afterward changed to ὁ πόντος Εὐξείνος, the hospitable sea, not because they feared it less, but because they wished to avoid using words of evil omen. The Hebrew appreciation of nature on the other hand was not limited to its milder aspects, but included such scenes as in the Greek inspired only fear.

The greater inclusiveness of the Hebrew appreciation of nature was due to a fundamental difference in the way the two peoples thought of nature in relation to God. To both, nature was divine. They differed only in their understanding of the relation between the material and the spiritual. The Greek thought of nature as the elemental reality, the soul of whose beauty was embodied in the divinities who haunted it. The thought of the gods was to him the artistic completion of his thought of nature. Quite different was the Hebrew view of the relation of nature to God. To the Hebrew, God was the primary reality; nature was wholly secondary. Not only was it true that "without him was not anything made that was made," but the continued existence of nature was dependent on his will. To the Hebrew nature was a mere shadow, finding the essence of

its beauty as well as the sustaining power of its life in One whose providential care watches over the great things and the small—who brings forth the constellations in their season, and provides for the raven his food. Consequently, the Hebrew never considered natural objects as beautiful in and for themselves, but as beautiful or majestic symbols of God.

Instead of implying a limitation of the Hebrew appreciation of natural beauty, such a view of nature's relation to God really increased it by rendering visible the spiritual significance of aspects of nature which in the Greek excited fear, or at most, but a languid interest. Thus the mountains round about Jerusalem came to symbolize God's protecting care for his people, and the fact of their being such a symbol emphasized their beauty. The cedars that waved on Lebanon were not less, but more beautiful for being "the cedars which he hath planted" (Ps. CIV:16). The growth of the tree became to them the symbol of spiritual growth. "The righteous shall grow like a tree planted by the rivers of waters" (Ps. I:1). The rushing river, which to the Greek poet suggested only destructive force, became to the Hebrew a symbol of the coming of Yahveh to punish the wicked and to save his people. "He shall come as a rushing stream which the breath of Yahveh driveth" (Isa. LIX:19). The thunder, which terrified the Greek when he heard it on the left, had no terrors for the Hebrew, for to him it was the voice of God—the God who had entered into a covenant (*b'rith*) with Israel (Ps. XXIX); nor did they fear the sea, though they were not a maritime people, for "the sea is his, and he made it" (Ps. XCV:5). The voices of nature were to the Hebrew a symphony of praise filling the earth,

as on solemn feast-days the music of Israel's hymns filled the Temple courts. "In his Temple everything saith Glory!" (Ps. XXIX:9).

#### ANALYSIS OF BOOK OF HABAKKUK

- I. Title.
- II. The Chaldeans, the agents of God's just judgments against sin, I:1-11.
- III. The prophet's question: Can God's government of the world be just?—I:12—II:1.
- IV. God's answer: Only righteousness is permanent, II:2-4.
- V. The complete destruction of the Chaldeans is decreed, II:5-20.
- VI. The prayer of Habakkuk—a lyric, III.
  - A. The appearance of Yahveh to judge the earth, III:1-15.
  - B. The prophet's expression of trust, III:16-19.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON HABAKKUK

Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 78-79.  
 Orelli, *Twelve Minor Prophets*, pp. 240-259.  
 Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 188-189.  
 Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 37-38.

#### QUESTIONS ON HABAKKUK

What is the probable date of the prophecy?  
 What were the military operations of the Chaldeans in Palestine? Read II Kings XXIII:36 to XXIV:18.  
 What causes the prophet's perplexity?  
 What is the answer to his query?

Does the reply really answer the question raised or does it seem like an evasion?

What grounds exist for saying that the book marks the beginning of philosophic speculation in Israel?

Comment upon the Hebrew view of nature as exemplified in the Ode (Chapter III) and compare this view with the Greek.

## CHAPTER XI

### JEREMIAH, THE PROPHET OF PERSONAL RELIGION

IF the Book of Jeremiah were a modern book, it would probably be entitled *The Life, Times and Work of Jeremiah*. It is not an autobiography, nor is it anywhere stated that the narratives or the addresses it contains were written by the prophet. They are evidently the work of a well-informed contemporary, probably Jeremiah's secretary, Baruch. From the Book itself we know that Baruch wrote the first and second editions of the Book (XXXVI: 2-4), and that "there were added besides unto them many like words" (XXXVI:32). In other words, the first and second editions of the Book were written from the prophet's recollection of his utterances, which were largely supplemented at the time of writing. The first edition probably included Chapters II to X, and perhaps also X to XIII. The second edition may have included these chapters (with some later additions) as far as Chapter XX, together with Chapter XXV and the introductory chapter. All the rest of the Book of Jeremiah is of later date, belonging to the reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, and to the exilic period.<sup>45</sup> Like the Book of Isaiah, the Book of Jeremiah is thus seen to be a compilation of the work of many hands, and to be without absolute sequence of either thought or time. There is apparently no logical arrangement of the thought; and in the matter of chron-

<sup>45</sup> See Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, p. 177.



ology there is equal confusion, events which happened late in the prophet's life often preceding those that happened earlier. Many of the most striking utterances give no hint whatever of the occasions that called them forth.

Yet, in spite of the incoherency of the Book, we are able to construct a more complete biography of Jeremiah than almost any that has come to us from the ancient world. He was born at the village of Anathoth hardly more than an hour's walk to the northeast of Jerusalem, of a priestly family, about 650 B.C. His consciousness of his prophetic mission came in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (626 B.C.); the opening of his ministry was thus almost coincident with that of Zephaniah.

Like Zephaniah, he became articulate as a prophet as a result of the threat of the Scythian invasion in 626. The account of his prophetic call in Chapter I tells of two visions—that of the blossoming almond, suggesting God's watchfulness,<sup>46</sup> and that of the huge caldron tipping toward the south, and ready to spill its boiling contents over the land, symbolic of the fiery flood of Scythian invasion with which Yahveh was about to punish his apostate people. Yahveh has summoned these northern foes because the people have forsaken him, burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the work of their hands.

In a series of brief, vivid, and picturesque oracles he depicts the coming of the wild northern hosts:

<sup>46</sup> Here (Jer. I: 11, 12) we have another prophetic play upon words. The word *shokedh*, (watching) and *shakedh* (almond tree) have almost the same sound, and apparently furnish the whole point of the vision. We need to remind ourselves again, however, that punning was not to the Hebrews the trivial or flippant amusement that it is to us.

Behold a people is coming from the north country,  
And a great nation is aroused from the ends of the earth.  
They lay hold of the bow and spear;  
Cruel are they and show no mercy.

The sound of them is like the roar of the sea, and upon  
horses they ride.

Arrayed like a man for battle against thee, O daughter of  
Zion,

We have heard the report of him; our hands relax,  
Pain has seized us, anguish like that of a woman in travail.  
Do not go forth to the field, and do not walk in the road;  
For there is the sword of the foe, terror on every hand.

O daughter of my people, gird on sackcloth and bestrew  
yourself with dust,

Make your lamentation as for an only son, bitter mourning;  
For suddenly will the destroyer come upon us.<sup>47</sup>

As a matter of fact, the Scythian invasion proved to be, not the world cataclysm the prophet had anticipated, but only the plundering raid of a horde of nomads. The terror it inspired was quite out of proportion to the actual damage inflicted. Judah and Jerusalem among their hills escaped the attention of these mounted invaders. As a result, Jeremiah was discredited as a prophet. He lost the confidence of the people, and seems even partially to have lost faith in himself, and in the genuineness of his call to be a prophet. He became silent after the Scythian invasion for about fourteen years. He seems to have had very slight connection with Josiah's reform consequent upon the discovery of the Deuteronomic legislation in 621 B.C.<sup>48</sup> Nor did the fall of Nineveh stir him to utterance.

The principal subject of his early preaching is

<sup>47</sup> Jer. VI: 22-26. The translation is quoted from J. M. Powis Smith, *The Prophets and Their Times*, p. 115.

<sup>48</sup> There are but two possible allusions to Deuteronomy in Jeremiah. These are XI: 1-8 and VIII: 8. It seems impossible to account for such slight allusion except on the ground that he was distrusted both by king and people.

idolatry, particularly the worship of the queen of heaven (Ishtar), the foreign religious cult which had been introduced by Manasseh. With his gift for vivid description Jeremiah paints the activity of whole families in this puerile and degrading ritual:

Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger, saith the Lord? Do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?

VII: 18.

This idolatry is symbolized under the figure of marital infidelity made familiar by Hosea a century before. The prophet compares Judah unfavorably with Israel, for, though she has seen her sister put away for unfaithfulness (alluding, of course, to the overthrow of the northern kingdom), she has not been warned, but has pursued a like course.

Only a small part of our present book shows evidence of belonging to the first period of Jeremiah's ministry, which ended with the tragic death of Josiah at Megiddo in 608 B.C. The Battle of Megiddo was unquestionably the most tragic day in Judah's history, when the hopes of Israel seemed to be wrecked on the rocks of the rude facts of national experience. The best king that ever sat on David's throne was slain in his rash attempt to dispute the passage of Pharaoh Hophra across Palestine (II Kings XXIII:29ff). The religious reaction in Judah was immediate and complete. People felt that Yahveh had failed against the stronger gods of Egypt. The promises of Deuteronomy seemed to be vain. People turned back to the old

heathenisms, and Yahveh became but one of their many gods. With the revival of idolatry, came back all the sensualism, the injustice and the selfishness of Manasseh's reign. Under Jehoiakim, Judah was a typical oriental kingdom with all its worst features well developed.

Under such conditions Jeremiah's life became a continued martyrdom of unsuccessful struggle against fearful odds. The false prophets bitterly resented his arraignment of them (XXIII:9ff; XXVIII). The priests also hated him for his ridicule of the theory of the inviolability of Mount Zion, which since Isaiah's time had become a favorite doctrine (VII:4). They detested him still more for his fearless denunciation of their pretensions (VIII:8). The sages disliked him for his contempt of their vaunted wisdom (VIII:9). His fellow citizens of Anathoth planned his assassination (XI:21, 22). The princes of the royal house slandered him to the king and demanded his execution (XXXVIII:4). King Jehoiakim heaped insults upon him and burned his writings (XXXVI:23). He would have cast him into prison, had he been able to apprehend him. Zedekiah, his successor, at the suggestion of his nobles did actually authorize his imprisonment (XXXVIII:4-5). Thus the common people, together with the political and intellectual leaders of the nation, seem to have ignored their differences in their common hatred of this prophet who brought them such an amazing and unwelcome message of impending ruin. It is little to be wondered at that Jeremiah, tired of the struggle, should have longed to escape (IX:2). Like Job, he viewed his life as a long servitude; and, like him, he cursed the day of his birth (XX:14ff). He seemed to himself to have failed in his mission, and

doubted the genuineness of his call to undertake it (XX:7). Yet he went forth from his hours of weakness and rebellion to the duties of a prophet called to a mission of tragedy.

... though fallen on evil days,  
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues  
In darkness and with dangers compassed round, and solitude . . .

Few and evil indeed were the days left to the kingdom of Judah after the tragic death of Josiah at Megiddo. The son chosen to succeed Josiah was promptly deposed by the victorious Pharaoh, who appointed a younger son Jehoiakim to reign as an Egyptian vassal. Early in his reign Nineveh fell before the rising power of the Medes and the Babylonians. There followed the death grapple between Babylon and Egypt at Carchemish on the Euphrates in 604 B.C., when the Egyptians were decisively defeated. As a result, the vassalage of Palestine was transferred from Egypt to Babylon. For a few years Jehoiakim ruled as a subject king of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, dying just as his perfidy brought the army of the Chaldeans before the walls of Jerusalem to suppress the revolt. The son, Jehoiachin, sat on the throne for three months and then surrendered at discretion to the besieging army in 597. The king himself, with the flower of his people, the "good figs," as Jeremiah called them (XXIV:1ff) were deported to Babylon, and Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah replaced him on the throne.

Within a few months of the disaster at Megiddo, Jeremiah came into sharp conflict with the popular religion of the time. The occasion was a gathering of the people in the court of the Temple, where they

were exciting their own patriotic fervor by the monotonous repetitions so characteristic of oriental peoples, "The Temple of Yahveh, the temple of Yahveh, the temple of Yahveh, is this" (VII:4). As a correction to this false confidence, Jeremiah, standing at the gate of the Temple, declared in the name of the Lord:

Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words saying, The temple of Yahveh, the temple of Yahveh, the temple of Yahveh is this. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore.

VII: 3-7.

This is one of the memorable assertions of prophecy, embodying a recognition of the fundamental truth that religion and ethics are inseparable, that the chief concern of religion is the equitable adjustment of human relationships, in other words, social justice.

The third period of Jeremiah's ministry extends from the surrender of Jehoiachin and the partial exile of 597 to the close of his ministry after the fall of the city in 586. The first half of Zedekiah's reign seems to have passed without outward disloyalty. Jeremiah's interest during this period was divided between the exiles in Babylon and the people left in Judah. To the former he wrote advising them to prepare for a long stay in Chaldea, preserving intact their family and community life (XXIX:4-14). To the people left in Judah he recommended a quiet submission to Babylon. Rebellion he saw to be hope-



less and the promises of help from Egypt unreliable (XXVII:5-11).

His advice was, however, disregarded. Zedekiah, relying upon promised aid from Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt, revolted. Within a year a Chaldean army appeared, and laid siege to Jerusalem. The city held out for a year and a half till, wasted by famine and pestilence, it was finally taken by assault in 586. The Chaldeans plundered and burned it, and carried off as captives the bulk of the population, leaving Gedaliah as governor of the little community that was left, establishing his seat as governor at Mizpah, a few miles north of Jerusalem. Upon the murder of the governor by a renegade Jew, the little company, against Jeremiah's protest, fled to Egypt, taking the prophet with them. It is there that we have our last glimpse of him, denouncing the worship of the queen of heaven to whom the refugees were burning incense. There is a tradition that his own people stoned him to death in Egypt, and another legend that he escaped to Babylon, where he died. In either case, the events of his agitated life are comparatively unimportant except as they contributed to his spiritual discoveries.

There is no question that out of his sense of failure and out of his sense of isolation from his people there developed a keener realization than any prophet hitherto had felt that religion—the right relation between man and God—is an individual and not a national matter. Such a discovery could not have come even to him had not the indifference of careless monarchs and a careless people forced upon him the conviction that the realization of the ideals of Israel—the hope of the kingdom of God on earth—could be looked for no longer in the corporate life of the nation, but only in the life of the individual.



It is this hope which alone saves him from despair. Like the author of the epilogue to the Book of Amos (Amos IX:15), he too looks forward to a blessed future for Israel, but the two prophets conceive of this future in different ways. The earlier prophet thinks of it as a time when Israel shall be restored to God's favor, and to national integrity and prosperity under a Davidic king. Jeremiah on the other hand, while predicting that Yahveh will turn against the captivity of Jacob's tents (XXX:18), does not anticipate a renewal of the old covenant relations between God and Israel. Instead, there will be, he says, a new covenant between God and the individual souls of his people:

Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

XXXIII: 31-33.

Scorn and shame and persecution were the portion of this martyr-prophet in his life, yet out of his suffering grew a new conception of religion as a covenant between God and the individual soul, which is today the most treasured possession of both Jew and Christian. He was the first religious teacher to lay stress on the individual's relationship to God, and God's relationship to the individual. He discovered the necessity for individual righteousness as the chief factor in a nation's good. To him first it was evident that in God's eyes the unit was not the race, but the man. If Judah was to be saved, it would not be through the activities of

priests nor even prophets, but by everyone's turning from his evil way. The glory of Jeremiah is that he discovered the responsibility of the individual.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

- I. First Period—625-608.
  - A. Title, I:1-3.
  - B. Inaugural vision, I:4-19.
  - C. Early preaching, II—VI.
  - D. Preaching covenant throughout Judah, XI:1-8.
- II. Second Period—608-597.
  - A. Vanity of trust in the Temple, VII:1-20.
  - B. Refusal to listen to the prophets, VII:21—VIII:22.
  - C. A lament, VIII and X:17-25.
  - D. Failure to observe the covenant, XI:9-17.
  - E. Persecution of the prophet, XI:18—XII:6.
  - F. Judah overrun, XII:7-17.
  - G. Symbol of the girdle, XIII:1-17.
  - H. Lament for the captivity of the king, XIII:18-19.
  - I. Can the Ethiopian change his skin? XIII:20-27.
  - J. Prophet pleads with God, XIV:1—XVII:18.
  - K. Lessons from the potter, XVIII—XX.
  - L. Judgments on rulers, XXII:10—XXIII:8.
  - M. Babylon to rule, XXV.
  - N. Temple to be destroyed, XXVI.
  - O. The Rechabites as an example of faithfulness in contrast to the Jews, XXXV.
  - P. Writing prophecies, XXXVI.
  - Q. Message of Baruch, XLV.
- III. The Third Period—597-586.

- A. Reply to Zedekiah, XXI:1-10.
- B. Appeal to the court, XXI:11—XXII:9.
- C. The false prophets, XXIII:9-40.
- D. The symbolism of the figs, XXIV.
- E. False hopes, XXVII—XXIX.
- F. Restoration, vision of a spiritualized future, XXX—XXXIII.
- G. The breaking of the covenant to free slaves, XXXIV.
- H. The last siege, XXXVII—XXXIX.
- I. The prophet's experience after the fall of Jerusalem, XL—XLIV.
- J. Prophecies against foreign nations, XLVI—LI.
- K. The fall of Jerusalem, LII (an historical appendix).

## SUGGESTED READING ON JEREMIAH

- Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 91-107.  
 Fisk, *The Great Epic of Israel*, pp. 178-181.  
 Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 212-224.  
 Orelli, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 329-345.  
 Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 177-188.  
 Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 32-34, 36-41, 44-47, 48-49.  
 Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophets and Their Times*, pp. 134-160.

## QUESTIONS ON JEREMIAH

What preceding prophet does Jeremiah most resemble? Give the most important details of his personal history, noting the date of his call to be a prophet and the length of his ministry.

Into what three periods may the ministry be divided? Give an account of the political history of the kingdom of Judah during his ministry.

What was Jeremiah's relation to the Deuteronomic reform?

What does the Deuteronomic reform illustrate concerning the efficiency of reforms accomplished by legal enactment?

Give an account of the composition of the Book of Jeremiah based on Chapter XXXVI.

Compare the account of Jeremiah's inaugural vision (Jer. I) with that of Isaiah (Is. 6).

What did Jeremiah try to teach through the symbol of the potter (XVIII—XX)? Notice, Brown-ing's use of this same symbol in his poem, "Rabbi ben Ezra."

What national policy did Jeremiah advocate?

What advice did he give to those carried away captive to Babylon in 597? See Jer. XXIV and XXIX.

What significance had the symbolic act recorded in Chapter XXXII?

What was the prophet's hope of restoration? See especially Chapter XXXIII.

Describe the terms of the "new covenant." XXXI: 31-40.

What significant feature of the prophet's teaching is contained in XVI:19-21?

What do you consider Jeremiah's most important contribution to the thought of the modern world?

## CHAPTER XII

### EZEKIEL, THE FATHER OF JUDAISM

AMONG those carried away captive from Jerusalem in the first deportation, that of 597, was the young priest Ezekiel, who, because he came to exert so profound an influence upon the later religious life of his people deserves to be called the father of Judaism. In Babylonia he lived in the community of exiles that was settled at Tel-Abib by the river or canal Chebar, to the east of the city of Babylon, occupying his own house, whither the elders of Israel resorted to hear his message.

There, five years after the deportation, he saw in trance-vision Yahveh riding out of the North in his chariot to join the exiles in Babylonia. It was a strange vision, wholly different from the simple majesty of the one Isaiah saw in the Temple in the year Uzziah died (Is. VI), for Ezekiel perhaps influenced by the elaborate symbolism of Babylonian art, carried to an extreme the prophetic tendency to symbolic teaching. In this inaugural vision, shining, winged beings, with faces of man, lion, bull, and eagle; wheels, whose felloes were set with eyes; the likeness of a throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone; one having the appearance of fire from his loins downward, and from his loins upward, as it were, glowing metal; give an impression almost of grotesque confusion,<sup>49</sup> redeemed only by

<sup>49</sup> It takes Ezekiel almost three chapters (I:4 to III:16) to describe his inaugural vision, while Isaiah told his in thirteen verses. Isaiah suggests; Ezekiel describes.

the dignity of the message the vision was meant to convey.

In the first place the fact that the vision appears, not from the direction of Jerusalem, but "out of the North," always to the Hebrews the land of mystery, emphasizes an idea totally opposed to the religious prejudices of the time. This is the conception of God as independent of Israel, who lives and reigns, though his people are exiled, and his sanctuary profaned. Subordinate to this, which is the primary suggestion of the vision, is the idea symbolized by the "wheels within wheels" of the chariot. The meaning undoubtedly is that each wheel was composed of two concentric wheels at right angles to each other, so that the chariot could move in any direction without turning or cramping the wheels, the symbolism of such an arrangement being meant to suggest the idea of God's unchanging purpose as of "one in whom is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning" (*Cf.* Jas. I:17). The eyes in the felloes of the wheels symbolize life, the whole vehicle being, as Milton says

. . . undrawn,  
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed  
By four cherubic shapes.  
*Par. Lost*, VI, 751-753.<sup>50</sup>

The Book of Ezekiel deals with two great themes: the destruction of the city and nation, and the reconstruction of the national life, and its eternal peace. The Book thus falls into two equal divisions of twenty-four chapters each. Chapters I—XXIV, containing prophecies of the destruction of the city

<sup>50</sup> To appreciate the wealth of poetic suggestion in the vision the reader is advised to read the whole passage referred to, in which Milton describes the chariot of "Paternal Deity" in terms borrowed from Ezekiel.

and nation, its certainty and necessity, are made up mostly of symbolic actions of which explanations are added, or of allegories and riddles, the meaning of which is explained. Here Ezekiel appears wholly as a prophet of doom. In Chapters XXV—XLVIII the prophet becomes a prophet of hope, speaking of restoration and the reconstruction of the nation, and ending with a vision of the final and perfect state of Israel as a holy people.

One characteristic of the author the attentive reader can hardly fail to note; this is his fondness for symbolic figures, symbolic acts and visions. These are all due to his peculiar cast of mind. Like Bunyan, Ezekiel apparently thought in pictures; and the pictures are invariably symbols. These symbols are often strikingly effective and beautiful. One of the finest is that of the elegy on the princes of Judah (XIX), in which the nation is represented as a lioness rearing her whelps, one after another of which, when they had learned to catch the prey, was trapped by the nations and caged in captivity, so that their voices are "no more heard upon the mountains of Israel." The allegory was perfectly plain to every Jew, for the lion was traditionally the recognized symbol of the tribe of Judah as in the Blessing of Jacob (Gen. XLIX:9) in which Judah is called "a lion's whelp." In the captive lion's whelps it was easy to recognize Jehoahaz, carried captive to Egypt, and Jehoiakin taken captive by the Babylonians. Again, Israel is represented as a foundling whose father was an Amorite and her mother a Hittite, left exposed in the open field to die (XVI). Pitied by a passing stranger, she is rescued and reared by him with loving care. Ultimately she becomes his wife, only to prove unfaithful when her inherited tendencies to depravity assert themselves.



Here Ezekiel employs a symbolism familiar since the time of Hosea. Of singular impressiveness is the representation of Tyre, the merchant city, as a ship (XXVII) whose hull was built of cypress, whose mast was a cedar of Lebanon, whose oars were oaks of Bashan, whose decks were inlaid with ivory, and whose sail was made of the fine linen of Egypt.<sup>51</sup> But this goodly ship, the mistress of the sea, is overwhelmed by the storm of God's wrath, and founders to the amazement and anguish of all seafaring men, who lament over her in the elegy that follows (vv. 32-36):

Who was like Tyre (so glorious)  
     In the midst of the Sea?  
 When thy wares went forth from the seas  
     Thou fillest the peoples;  
 With thy wealth and thy merchandize  
     Thou enrichedst the earth  
 Now thou are broken from the Seas—  
     In depths of the waters;  
 Thy merchandize and all thy multitude  
     Are fallen therein.  
 All the inhabitants of the island—  
     Are shocked at thee,  
 And their kings shudder greatly—  
     With tearful countenances.  
 They that trade among the peoples—  
     Hiss over thee;  
 Thou art become a terror—  
     And art no more forever.<sup>52</sup>

Most interesting of all Ezekiel's visions, however,

<sup>51</sup> This description of Tyre furnished the suggestion for Milton's account of the entrance of Dalilah in *Samson Agonistes*, 710 ff.

<sup>52</sup> The rendering is that of Dr. John Skinner, *Ezekiel* (Expositor's Bible) Chapter XVII. In his translation of the dirge, he has aimed to reproduce the effect of the *qinah* or elegiac meter in which the verse is divided by the cæsura into two members of unequal length, the second being shorter, and falling with a mournful cadence.

is that of the valley of the dry bones (XXXVII). Here he sees in trance a valley full of dry bones, "very many on the surface of the valley and very dry," and is commanded to prophesy over them, whereupon they become united, clothed with flesh, and vitalized with living breath. It is the simplest of all Ezekiel's visions. The "dry bones" are the whole house of Israel, among whom the current mood of discouragement was finding expression in the popular saying (v. II), "Our bones are dried; our hope is lost: we feel ourselves cut off." To change such a mood of popular discouragement, the vision was designed by substituting for it a belief in a national resurrection.

As such, the vision supplies a most interesting connection between the older thought of death and the later conception of individual immortality. The relatively late development in Israel of the belief in a future life is a matter of common knowledge. In the first six Books of the Bible there is no evidence of any hope of a life after death. When Abraham buried his wife, there was no hope expressed of meeting her beyond the grave. Jacob expresses a hope for the ultimate settlement in Canaan of the tribes which have sprung from him, but none for his own continued existence: "Lo, I am dying, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers" (Gen. XLVIII:21). For Joseph the last hope is a grave with his people in Canaan (Gen. L:24-26). In the laws attributed to Moses there is no threat of a penalty beyond the grave, nor promise of a reward after death. Both penalty and reward are spoken of as belonging to this present life. And as for Moses himself, though it is said that God "buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-Peor," nothing is said of a future of

Moses with God. There is one apparent exception in the mysterious story of Enoch (Gen. V:21 ff.), but it is to be noted that this story does not indicate a popular belief in a life after death, but rather a miraculous transference, without death, to the presence of God.

So, too, in the historical Books that follow the Hexateuch there appears no sure hope of an after life with God. There are traces, to be sure, of a popular belief in a vague and shadowy existence after death in a place called "Sheol," which is described as a "land of darkness, and of the shadow of death" (Job XXX:23). The dwellers in it are called "shades" (*rephaim*), and may be evoked by "them that have familiar spirits," and by "wizards that chirp and mutter" (Is. VIII:19). This popular belief is thought to have been a survival of a primitive ancestor-worship, and was quite outside the pale of respectability, being regarded as alien to the religion of Yahveh. The wizards and necromancers could be consulted only by stealth as the Witch of Endor was by Saul (I Sam. XXVIII). As in the Pentateuch, there is a legend of one exceptional person, in this case God's representative on earth, who escapes death, and is translated alive to God's presence; but Elijah in his fiery chariot is no assurance of a future life to the common man. There are stories of restoration to life of persons who have died (I Kings XVII:17 ff.; II Kings IV:32 ff.; II Kings XIII:21). Indeed, that God could by a miracle restore the dead to life no devout Israelite ever doubted. It is to be noted that the recorded instances of such miracles, however, are all of those recently dead, and there is no evidence in the historical books of a general belief in the possibility of resurrection for those whose bones are "scattered and dry."

Nor is there in the prophets' writings any teaching about the relations of Yahveh to the dead. Their concern was chiefly with the nation, rather than with the individual. In their view, the continuance of the national life as a prerequisite to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth was all-important; and the individual Israelite must seek his immortality in the continued life of the nation. It is only occasionally in a late Psalm (LXXIII: 23-26) or in a drama presenting the mystery of suffering (Job XIX:25 ff.) that we find any recognition before the Second Century B.C. of the possibility of life after death. Yet the writer of the seventy-third psalm seems to be expressing a revolt from the thought of a future apart from God, rather than an assured faith in an after life, and the author of Job makes no use of the idea that there may be a life after death that will right the wrongs of this. Job's expression of trust in a vindication after death is like a spark struck from the anvil of his despair (Job XIX:25-26). It disappears at once, and he falls back upon other lines of search for justification of the ways of God with man.

It is not till the very late Book of Daniel, about 165 B.C., that we find an explicit prediction of the resurrection of "many of them who sleep in the dust on the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. XII: 2, 3).

Between this passage in Daniel and the older thought of death as the end of life, Ezekiel's vision of the "dry bones" is a link, and as such, is an important contribution to the Old Testament doctrine

of personal immortality. Obviously it is only a step from the thought of the possibility of a national resurrection to that of the resurrection of the individual Israelite.

Another contribution of Ezekiel to the world's thought, scarcely less notable than the one just mentioned, is closely connected with the work of his predecessor, Jeremiah. The latter, it will be remembered, had emancipated Hebrew religion from the persistent notion that it was the nation and not the individual with whom Yahveh had primarily to do. The sense of individual responsibility in matters of religion first found expression in Jeremiah, who taught that a man must stand or fall on his own merits. Beyond this Jeremiah had not gone. It remained for Ezekiel to develop the idea of religious fellowship by educating his compatriots, not only to live as religious individuals, but to live as religious individuals in a theocracy.

Ezekiel's plan of a holy state is the earliest example of an ideal commonwealth, antedating Plato's *Republic* by nearly two centuries. It is, as we should expect from its Hebrew origin, the first detailed plan of a theocracy—the design of a state in which God is the supreme ruler, exercising his authority through his priests or ministers. It is an ideal that has appeared more than once in Christian history—in the rule of the Popes in the Middle Ages, and in the Puritan sects of the Seventeenth Century, like the Fifth Monarchy Men of the Commonwealth period in England. Indeed, the Puritan Commonwealth itself was in part an attempt to realize Ezekiel's ideal of the kingdom of the saints, a kingdom of God on earth. Such attempts have always failed, as the Puritan "kingdom of the saints" failed, and as all such attempts must invariably fail so long

as human nature is what it is. For the realization of Ezekiel's dream there is required such a citizenship as he assumed of men in whose hearts the new covenant has been written, who sin only unawares, and upon whom therefore no punishment save an ecclesiastical penance need ever be imposed. There is no mistaking his meaning:

For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep mine ordinances, and do them.

XXXVI: 25-29.

Such a regeneration of the Jewish people, disciplined by the sufferings of the Exile, Ezekiel confidently expected; and he planned accordingly. His plans provided for the rebuilding of the Temple, the re-establishment of worship, and for the reappportionment of the land. The Temple was to be like the old one destroyed by the Chaldeans, but larger. The worship, too, was to be more elaborate so as to express the stronger sense of guilt which the punishment of the Exile had impressed upon the mind of Israel. The land from the border of Damascus northward to Hamath in the Lebanon district, and south to Kadesh, the center of the ancient wilderness sojourn, was to be divided into twelve equal zones from the east side to the west side, each to be the portion of a tribe. Of these divisions, seven were to be north of Jerusalem, and five south. Between the two groups of zones was to be the central sanctuary, with the land of the priests and Levites. The whole was to be the spiritual charge, not of a



king, for the kingly function was to disappear with the removal of war, but of a high priest and his subordinate ministers. These were to constitute a priestly caste whose divinely sanctioned office no earthly power could take away. For the preservation of their ritual purity Ezekiel provides most carefully. They are to wear no woollen garment; they must not approach a corpse, unless it be that of parent, child, brother, or unmarried sister. On passing from the inner to the outer courts of the Temple, they are to change their clothing completely "that they sanctify not the people with their garments"—in other words, lest they mingle the sacred and the profane.

The laws governing the holy state are wholly ritual, and concern (a) the Temple and the altar, XL—XLIII, (b) the priests, XLIV, (c) the sacrifices, XLV:9—XLVI. This meager equipment of legislation was not, however, to be the only code possessed by the restored community. Though Ezekiel provided no civil code, because, obviously, with such a citizenship as he presupposes, none was needed, he evidently does assume that the regulations he gives will be supplemented by those embodied in the "Holiness Code" of Leviticus (Levit. XVII—XXVI). Again and again, as when he prescribes the laws that are to govern the life of the priests in the holy state, he expresses himself in terms so nearly identical with those of the "holiness code" as to prove that he was not only familiar with it, but that he regarded it as an authoritative basis of moral and religious life.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> For a full list of these correspondences see Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 146, 147. These are so numerous as to have led some to believe that Ezekiel was himself the author of the "holiness code."



Ezekiel's plan of a holy state has been called an unpractical ideal, a Utopian scheme, impossible of realization. It has been pointed out that under his influence the restored community was organized on an ecclesiastical basis, but unsuccessfully, that the Jewish post-exilic theocracy failed no less lamentably than the political state had previously failed, and that the failure was due to the fact that the purification and regeneration of the Jewish people through the sufferings of the Exile, which Ezekiel expected and assumed, did not as a matter of fact occur. Was it then only the dream of an old Jewish ecclesiastic? On the contrary, Ezekiel was entirely right in his belief that the ideal social state can be achieved only by a citizenship of persons who have been individually transformed. Only morally regenerated men, with a realization that this is God's world, and that moral forces must be taken account of in its administration will ever be able to establish a state in which justice and mercy will actually prevail. This was certainly the teaching of Jesus (John III:1-5), and is the only hope of humanity. Unless the human race is actually progressing toward a measurable attainment of this ideal, its history will have been but a brief and discreditable episode in the existence of one of the minor planets.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

##### I. First Period

- A. Preface, I:1-3.
- B. The prophet's repeated call, I:4—III.
- C. Symbols of doom, IV-V.
- D. Pollution of the land, VI-VII.
- E. Visions of Jerusalem's sin and punishment, VIII—XI.

F. Further announcements of the city's impending fall, XII—XIX.

G. Prophecies of judgment, XX—XXIII.

H. At the beginning of the final siege, XXIV.

I. The doom of Egypt, XXIX:1-16, XXX-XXXI.

## II. Second Period

A. Israel restored, XXXIII.

B. Restoration hopes, XXXIV—XXXIX.

1. Promise of a Davidic prince, XXXIV.

2. The restored land and the new covenant, XXXV-XXXVI.

3. The resurrection of the nation, XXXVII:1-14.

4. Judah and Israel reunited under a Davidic king, XXXVII:15-28.

5. Yahveh's vindication upon the heathen, XXXVIII-XXXIX.

C. The plan of a holy state, XL—XLVIII.

1. The new Temple and altar, XL—XLIII.

2. The new priesthood, XLIV.

3. Allotment of the land, XLV:1-8.

4. The provisions for maintaining the sacrifices, XLV:9-XLVI.

5. The land made fertile and divided, XLVII-XLVIII.

## III. Ezekiel's prophecies against foreign nations (of uncertain date)

A. Against Ammon, Moab and Philistia for their hatred in the day of Judah's trouble, XXV.

B. Against Tyre about to be captured by Nebuchadnezzar, XXVI.

- C. Tyre's fate due to its greed and pride, XXVIII:1-19.
- D. Egypt, symbolized by the fallen cedar and the captured sea monster, to meet the fate of other great nations of the past, XXIX—XXXII.
  - 1. (Especially to be noted is the Dantesque requiem in XXXII: 18-31.)
- E. When Judah's enemies are all punished, Judah is to be restored, XXVIII:25-26.

## SUGGESTED READING ON THE EXILE

- Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 108-114.  
 Fiske, *The Great Epic of Israel*, pp. 192-194.  
 Harper, *The Post-Exilic Prophets*, pp. 1-13.  
 Ottley, *A Short History of the Hebrews*, pp. 221-226.  
 Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 207-208.  
 Sanders, *Old Testament History*, pp. 93-99.  
 Skinner, *Ezekiel* (Expositor's Bible), pp. 3-12.

## SUGGESTED READING ON EZEKIEL

- Baldwin, *Our Modern Debt to Israel*, pp. 65-79.  
 Bennett and Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 213-234.  
 Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 115-124.  
 Davidson, *Ezekiel* (Cambridge Bible), pp. IX-LV.  
 Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 278-298.  
 Fowler, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 233-250.  
 Robinson, *Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*, pp. 91-101.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 41-52.

Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophets and Their Times*, pp. 161-176.

#### QUESTIONS ON EZEKIEL

Who was Ezekiel; when and where did he prophesy? Compare his inaugural vision (Chapter I) with that of Isaiah (Is. VI).

What message was Ezekiel's vision meant to convey?

Comment on some literary associations with this passage.

Discuss Ezekiel's use of symbolism.

Explain the allegory of Chapters XVI:3-25, XIX:2-9, XXVII and XXXVII:1-14.

Comment in some detail on the significance of the latter passage (the vision of the valley of the dry bones).

What important contribution to religious thinking did Ezekiel make in Chapter XVIII?

Into what two periods may the work of Ezekiel be divided, and how does the work of the prophet in the two periods differ?

What were some of the effects of the Exile upon Jewish life?

In connection with Chapter XXXIII, read Whittier's poem, "Ezekiel," and note what aspect of the prophet's work appealed to the modern poet.

Discuss Ezekiel's plan of a holy state (XL—XLVIII) with relation to other ideal commonwealths.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DEUTERO-ISAIAH, THE VOICE OF COMFORT

A QUARTER of a century passed by after the latest date reflected by any of the writings of Ezekiel. He had predicted an early restoration, and had traced in the dust of the level soil of Chaldea the outline of the new Temple; but Ezekiel had been dead for thirty years; and all but the children among the early captives had gone their long way; and most of those who had been born and grown to maturity in exile were either hopeless or indifferent. Indeed, there seemed no possibility that captive Judah would be able to shake off the yoke of the greatest of world empires—that the promise of God in prophecy would ever be fulfilled. They had almost ceased to hope. God seemed to have forgotten them. Some, with that marvelous skill in adaptation for which the Jew has always been notable, had taken Jeremiah's advice and gone into traffic since their old agricultural life was no longer possible. Some had interested themselves in politics and been promoted to positions of trust. Still others had sunk to the grade of slaves employed by Nebuchadnezzar and his successors upon their palaces and hanging gardens, their ship canals and highways, which made Babylon the queen of cities and the wonder of the world.

Yet there was among them "the remnant," the faithful ones who recalled to mind that Ezekiel had spoken of forty years; and, as they counted the time, they could not but lift up their eyes, scanning the

horizon to determine if indeed from any quarter their salvation was drawing nigh.

It was a changing world on which they looked. In 550 B.C. three rulers—Nabunaid, the Chaldean; Astyages, the Mede; and Crœsus, the Lydian—controlled among them the western half of all Asia. Within twelve years, however, the western Asiatic powers had been reduced to one. The change occurred as a result of the activities of a single individual, one of the most fascinatingly attractive figures in all ancient history—Cyrus, prince of Ansan in Elam, the country adjoining Babylonia on the East. By the defeat of Astyages, his overlord, in 549 he became king of the Medes. His next great success was the overthrow of Crœsus whose capital, Sardis, with its fabulous wealth, fell into his hands in 540. Finally in 538 he entered Babylon through priestly treachery without striking a blow. Thus, at a stroke, all western Asia passed from the rule of the Semite to that of the Aryan, and a new chapter of human progress began.

The news of Cyrus's rapid successes stirred the hearts of the loyal Jewish captives in Babylon, and quickened their hope of deliverance. They began to feel sure that Cyrus was God's appointed agent for bringing about their release from captivity.

The articulate voice of this new hope was an anonymous prophet, variously known as Deutero-Isaiah, Second Isaiah, or as The Great Unknown.<sup>54</sup> Of the personality of the author it is difficult to obtain even a glimpse. He calls himself a "voice,"

<sup>54</sup> Professor Sanders (*Old Test. Prophecy*, p. 54) calls the fact that his name is unknown one of the "puzzles of sacred history." It does not seem hard to account for, in view of the undoubted fact that his confident prediction of the overthrow of Babylon would have exposed the author, had he been known, to the charge of treason.

and by no other prophet is the function of a voice more completely realized. The only thing we know about him is that his elusive personality is associated with Chapters XL—LV of the Book of Isaiah, which became attached to the prophecies of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, in a late editorial revision.

The allusions in the prophecy point conclusively to a date between 549 and 538, for Cyrus is mentioned as one who is already well-known as a conqueror, though the capture of Babylon is not yet an accomplished fact. Most scholars think the date of the prophecy is intermediate between 549 and 538, and most probably after the overthrow of Cræsus, or about 540 B.C.

It is a book of consolation. The keynote is struck in the opening lines of the poem, where the very sound of the Hebrew words suggests the crooning song of a mother as she sings her child to sleep:

*Nahammu, nahammu, ammi*

Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people:

*Dabberu 'al-lev Yerushalaim*

Speak ye home to the heart<sup>55</sup> of Jerusalem, and call unto her,

That accomplished is her time of service; that absolved is her iniquity

That she hath received of Yahveh's hand double for all her sins.

Throughout, the prophet's evident purpose is to kindle hope in those who had lost faith in Yahveh's power to care for his people and to rouse religious patriotism in them that lacked it. It is this attempt to arouse religious patriotism that accounts for the prophet's polemic against idols, in which he heaps

<sup>55</sup> The word used here is the ordinary Hebrew verb, to woo, and is used several times in the Old Testament in a purely human sense. Its use here in a divine message is entirely characteristic of the author.



satire alike on the images and on their makers, predicting the coming downfall of the state when Bel and Nebo will be carried into captivity. In contrast to the helpless idols, Deutero-Isaiah dwells upon the incomparableness of Yahveh.

To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal to him? says the Holy One.

Lift up your eyes on high.

And see who has created these,  
That brings out their host by number, and calls them all  
by name;

Because of the greatness of his might, and the strength of  
his power not one of them is lacking.

XL: 25, 26.

He has been called the protagonist of monotheism, the first to expound it, the first to reason about the unity of God. In majestic poetry he summons the nations, with their idols, before the judgment seat of God to prove their deity and to demonstrate their power.

Produce your cause, saith Yahveh.

Bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob.  
Let them bring them forth and declare unto us what shall  
happen:

Declare ye the former things what they are that we may  
consider them,

And know the latter end of them, or show us things to  
come.

Declare the things that are to come hereafter that we may  
know that ye are gods:

Yea, do good or do evil that we may be dismayed, and  
behold it together.

Behold ye are nothing, and your work is of nought;

An abomination is he that chooseth you.

XLI: 21-24.

It is in his prevailing tone of exultant optimism  
that part of Deutero-Isaiah's uniqueness lies. The  
prophets who preceded him had all been prophets

of doom. Jeremiah in his contest with Hananiah stated a demonstrable truth when he said: "The prophets that hath been before me and before thee of old prophesied against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war and of evil and of pestilence" (Jer. XXVIII:8). Deutero-Isaiah was therefore entirely outside the prophetic tradition in pouring out his glowing anticipations with contagious ardor. To stir the captives from their indifference he exhausts the resources of language in picturing the triumph of the return from captivity:

Behold the Lord God will come as a mighty one,  
And his arm shall rule for him:  
Behold his reward is with him,  
And his recompense before him.  
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,  
He shall gather the lambs in his arm,  
And carry them in his bosom,  
And shall gently lead those that give suck.

XL: 10.

In impassioned poetry he predicts that

Every valley shall be exalted  
And every mountain and hill shall be made low:  
And the crooked shall be made straight,  
And the rough places plain:  
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together:  
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

XL: 4-5.

All through the prophecy the same tone of exhilaration is evident. There is in no other poetry such magnificent energy, amounting sometimes to a kind of ecstatic rapture, as that in which this prophet tells of the good time coming—the redemption of Zion.

Again and again the poetry becomes wholly lyrical, like the choruses in a sacred oratorio:

Awake, awake; put on strength, O arm of Yahveh;  
 Awake as in the days of old, the generations of ancient  
 times.

LI: 9.

And again:

Go ye forth from Babylon,  
 Flee ye from the Chaldeans,  
 With a voice of singing declare ye,  
 Tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth:  
 Say ye, Yahveh hath redeemed his servant Jacob.  
 XLVIII: 20.

Often the prophecy takes the form of impassioned apostrophe. Thus Cyrus is addressed:

I will go before thee, and make the rough places smooth;  
 I will break in pieces the doors of brass  
 And cut in sunder the bars of iron;  
 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,  
 And hidden treasures of secret places,  
 That thou mayest know that it is I, Yahveh, who call thee  
 by thy name,  
 Even the God of Israel.

XLV: 2 ff.

Again it is Babylon, personified as a lady of the harem, suddenly reduced to the shameful condition of a slave, who is bidden:

Come down and sit in the dust,  
 O virgin daughter of Babylon;  
 Sit on the ground without a throne,  
 O daughter of the Chaldeans.

XLVII: 1 ff.

This personification forms an effective, and, no doubt, intentional contrast to that of Zion the bereaved widow, soon to be restored to the honor and joys of motherhood:

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;  
Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city:  
For henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the  
uncircumcised and the unclean.  
Shake thyself from the dust;  
Arise, sit on thy throne, O Jerusalem:  
Loose thyself from the bonds of thy neck, O captive  
daughter of Zion.

LII: 1, 2.

The most striking and significant of all the personifications in the prophecy are those of Israel as the Servant of the Lord. These are contained in four poems (XLII:1-4; XLIX:1-6; L:4-9, and LII:13-LIII:12). Here Israel is personified as the teacher and prophet of revelation, and a martyr for the world's redemption. Israel, disciplined by suffering, is portrayed as becoming to the world what the prophet was to Israel—God's spokesman or interpreter. Thus Deutero-Isaiah presents a most profound interpretation of Israel's suffering in the light of her mission. The problem of innocent suffering is solved by fixing the attention upon its purpose, not upon the reason for it. The prophet believes that through Israel's unmerited suffering, God's purpose for the world will be accomplished. That purpose is universal salvation—the establishment of the true religion in all the earth:

It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to restore the preserved of Israel;  
I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles  
That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the  
earth.

XLIX: 6.

In these four poems, but more especially in the last, Deutero-Isaiah made his most notable contribution to the thought of the modern world. This is

of course his presentation of the idea of vicarious or substitutionary suffering. In LIII:4-6 the nations of the world speak:

Surely he hath borne our griefs  
And carried our sorrows;  
Yet we did esteem him stricken  
Smitten of God and afflicted  
But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities.  
The chastisement of our peace was upon him,  
And with his stripes we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray,  
We have turned every one to his own way,  
And Yahveh hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Here they express the idea that Israel's sufferings were borne, not primarily because of her own sins, but rather because of the sins of the nations themselves. Two aspects of Israel's sufferings are here emphasized: first, that it was vicarious, borne in the place of others; second, that it had a redemptive value. The nations are represented as having been so stirred and touched by the realization that Israel, whom they have despised, has after all been suffering in their place, that there is wrought in them a complete change of heart. They are thereby brought to a recognition that the God of Israel is the world's God.

It was inevitable that Christian thought should have later interpreted these "Servant" poems as originally intended to foretell the suffering and death of Jesus of Nazareth. A reference to Matt. XII:7-21, in which the evangelist interprets Is. XLII:1-4 as applying to the experience of Jesus, shows how early in Christian thinking this tendency developed. This interpretation which sees in the Servant of Yahveh the Messiah is, however, untenable. Deutero-Isaiah did not prophesy of Jesus Christ, even though the

Christian may justify his claim that the prophet's ideal was fulfilled in him. Deutero-Isaiah certainly meant by the Servant of Yahveh Israel:

but thou Israel, my Servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen.  
XLI: 8.

and

Thou art my Servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.  
XLIX: 3.

But the Israel that the prophet had in mind was not the actual Israel of his day "blind" to its opportunity, and "deaf" to God's summons (XLII:19) but an idealized Israel, alert and responsive to the divine voice, and therefore fit to become God's agent in the establishment of his universal kingdom.

It was a great truth of life that this nameless prophet of the Sixth Century discovered—a truth of which the whole history of civilization is the record, that those who in every age have tried to do God's will in service to man have been misunderstood, deemed smitten of God, have been men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, have been in general despised and rejected. The martyrs of philosophy, science, political liberty, as well as of religion—men like Socrates, Galileo, and Judas Maccabeus—illustrate the truth this ancient poet saw, that suffering is redemptive.

#### ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH, XL—LV

#### I. Yahveh's deliverance of his people through Cyrus, XL—XLVIII.

A. Prologue, the four herald voices, XL:  
I-II.

B. Yahveh is about to lead his people home,  
XL:12—XLI.

1. The coming agent of deliverance, Cyrus.
2. The helpless idols.
- C. The Servant-Israel and his task, XLII:1-25.
- D. The value to God of the nation, XLIII:1-28.
- E. The folly of idolatry, XLIV:1-28.
- F. Yahveh's purpose being carried out in history, XLV:1-25.
- G. The idols and Yahveh, XLVI:1-13.
- H. Babylon about to fall, a taunt-song, XLVII:1-15.
- I. The undeserving nation and the far-seeing God, XLVIII:1-22.
- II. The assured restoration, XLIX—LV.
  - A. The Servant's Commission; note that here the Servant is the faithful remnant, XLIX:1-26.
  - B. The National and the Servant, L:1-11.
  - C. Exultant songs of coming restoration, LI—LII:12.
    1. (Read also Is. XXXV:1-10 which probably belongs with this passage.)
  - D. The Servant's success in his mission, LII:13—LIII:12.
  - E. The future glory of Zion, LIV.
  - F. The call to prepare for the return, LV.

## SUGGESTED READING ON DEUTERO-ISAIAH

On the period from 700 to 540 B. C.:

Kent, *History of the Jewish People, Babylonian Period*, pp. 79-98.

II Kings, XXI—XXV.



McCurdy, *History Prophecy and the Monuments*, Vol. III, pp. 354-378.

Skinner, *Isaiah XL-LXVI* (Cambridge Bible), pp. XVII ff.

Smith, G. A., *Isaiah XL—LXVI* (Expositor's Bible), pp. 26-68.

On the material of the prophecy:

Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 125-144.

Cornill, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, pp. 284-294.

McFadyen, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 132-139.

Orelli, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 376-413.

Peters, *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship*, pp. 135-152.

Sanders and Kent, *Messages of the Later Prophets*, pp. 149-193.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 224-228.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 53-58.

Skinner, *Isaiah XL-LXVI*, pp. IX ff.

Smith, G. A., *Isaiah XL-LXVI*, pp. 71 ff.

Todd, *Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel*, pp. 269-274.

#### QUESTIONS ON ISAIAH, XL—LV

Can you think of any reason why these chapters should have become attached to the prophecies of Isaiah, the son of Amoz?

Point out the indications of the historical background of the prophecy. See XLIII:5, 6, 14; XLVII:1-11; XLVIII:14, 15, 20; LI:11, 14; LII:3; XL:2; XLIV:26; LI:17-19; LII:1, 2; XLI:2-5; XLV:1-4.

Tell what you can of the political conditions in

Babylon after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, and of the rise of Cyrus.

What was the date of his conquest of Babylon?

What is the prophet's view of Cyrus's work?

What is the prophet's teaching on the following topics:

Idolatry (see XLIV:12-17); the power of God to deliver Israel (see XL:12-23; XLVI:1-11); Babylon's doom (see XLVII:1-3).

What new conception of Israel's mission is enunciated in the following passages: XLII:1-4, 7; XLIX:5, 6; L:4, 6; LIII:3-5?

Show how the identification of the Servant of Yahveh changes in the different passages.

How far was the ideal realized in Jeremiah, in the prophets as a whole, in Israel, or in the "remnant" (the faithful few)?

Notice some characteristics of the style of Deutero-Isaiah as exemplified in the following passages: LI—LII:12; XL:1; XLIII:7, 25; XLVIII:11, 15; LI:9, 12, 17; LII:1, 11.

Comment upon the author's frequent use of personification as illustrated in the following passages: XLVII:1-15; XLIX:18-23; LI:17-23; LII:1 *ff.*; LIV:1-6. Can you account for these personifications?

Observe Deutero-Isaiah's habit of repeating the same words in adjacent clauses, *e.g.*, XL:12-14, XL:31 and XLI:1, XLV:4 *ff.*, L:7, 9. Is this to be regarded as a stylistic defect?

## CHAPTER XIV

### HAGGAI, THE TEMPLE BUILDER

THE return from the Exile proved to be no such triumphal march as Deutero-Isaiah had led the captives to expect. Scarcely had Cyrus added the Babylonian Empire to his dominions when he issued in 538 B. C. an edict allowing the Jews to return to Palestine. The form of the edict is preserved at the close of the second book of Chronicles, and in a fuller form in the opening of the Book of Ezra:

Yahveh, the God of heaven, hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Yahveh, the God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.<sup>58</sup>

Not a large proportion of the Jews availed themselves of Cyrus's permission to return. To a majority of them Babylon seemed like home. Most of those who had actually lived in Judah were dead. Only deep-seated and very genuine religious zeal

<sup>58</sup> The extremely devout tone of the edict leads a good many modern scholars to question the genuineness of the alleged quotation. Cyrus was an Elamite, and a polytheist, who treated even the gods of conquered Babylon with consideration.

could lead them to abandon the ties that bound them to Babylon, and induce them to return to wasted Judah.

Yet a loyal band was organized in 537 B. C. to make the long journey to Jerusalem. According to Ezra there were 42,360 freemen, together with 7,337 servants and 245 singers in the caravan; but probably this number represents the muster roll of the return in the time of Nehemiah nearly a century later (Neh. VII). The number in the first return was probably much smaller; but it was a choice group. Its leaders were Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiakim and heir to the throne of David. Cyrus had made him *tirshatha*, or governor, of Judea, and had loaded him with gifts, including the Temple vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away to Babylon. Associated with him as leader was Joshua the high priest, the grandson of Seraiah, the last of the high priests who held office before the captivity. Most of those who went with them were of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin with some Levites, but undoubtedly there were representatives of all the tribes, for the term Israelites is thenceforth applied to them.

The journey occupied four months. Of course they found the city ruined and desolate, but they set bravely to work and cleared the rubbish from the site of the Temple, rebuilt the altar of burnt offering, and celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month, the festal month of the Jewish year, corresponding to our September or October. Having installed a regular system of worship, they set about rebuilding the Temple. The corner stone was laid in April of 535, but the completion of the building was delayed till the sixth year of Darius, 516 B. C.

The causes of the delay were partly the intrigues of the "people of the land," who resented the refusal of the leaders to accept their proffered help, and partly the uncertainties of the political situation.

Cyrus died in 529 B. C. during his campaign against the Scythians. Cambyses, his son, killed himself in 522 in a fit of drunken rage consequent upon hearing that a pretender, Gaumata, the Mede, had seized the throne during his absence in Egypt. The pretender reigned only a few months before his nobles, having discovered the falseness of his claims to the succession, killed him, and elected one of their own number, Darius, son of Hystaspes, as sovereign. He was an able ruler who directed the destinies of Asia for thirty-six years (521-485 B. C.). He organized the Persian empire on new principles. Instead of allowing each subject-state to be ruled by its own dynasty, he appointed satraps or governors, and installed an elaborate system of intercommunication between the different provinces and the central government, which made it possible to keep the realm in order and responsive to his own single will.

During his brief reign of eight months, Gaumata had issued an edict prohibiting the Jews from rebuilding the city (Ezra IV:21). Haggai and Zechariah then appeared; and at their instigation the rebuilding of the Temple seems to have been resumed (Ezra V:3), though intermittently.

The conditions calling forth the efforts of these two prophets and at the same time accounting for the lack of continuity in the work of rebuilding may be briefly summarized. The religious fervor of the Restoration had died out, and the returned exiles were now more concerned about building grand houses for themselves (Hag. I:4), and securing personal comforts than about rebuilding the Temple.

Secondly, the persistent hostility of the Samaritans weakened the hands of the builders. Thirdly, in addition to the Jews' lack of zeal and the Samaritan hostility, there was the political character of the period. This was the reign of Darius after he had suppressed the revolts in his empire, and while he was preparing for the European invasions destined to end so disastrously at Marathon and Salamis in 480 B. C. It was a time of peace, which was but the prelude to a greater struggle. Zechariah aptly described it (I:11) as a time when "the earth sitteth still and is at rest." It was a time when, if the Jews were to realize their destiny, moral power and a renewed lofty enthusiasm were absolutely necessary. These the prophets Haggai and Zechariah attempted to supply.

The name Haggai, an abbreviated form of Haggiah, means Yahveh's feasts, and probably indicates that he was born on some Jewish feast day. His prophecies were all delivered within four months, the sixth, seventh and ninth months of the year 520 B. C. They were probably delivered orally in the hearing of the people gathered at the festivals of the new moon and of tabernacles, and at the period of the autumn rains. They all center in the one object of demanding and encouraging the completion of the Temple begun in 535. To the disillusioned and disappointed people, inclined to believe that God had not returned with them from Chaldea, and that he was still angry with them, Haggai declared that it was their own fault for not providing a home for God. He declared that the hardships and distresses from which they suffered, including the drought and the failure of the crops, were the due penalty of their neglect. "Is it time," he asks, "for you yourselves

to dwell in your ceiled houses while this house lieth waste?" (I:4).

The prophecy consists of four addresses, or fragments of addresses. The first rebukes the people's indolence (I:2-11). The second encourages them to begin the work by the assurance of God's help, who will bring His house to honor (II:2 *ff.*); the third one, on the "foundation day," when they began again to lay stone on stone, announces a complete change in the mind of God, who, instead of evil, will now dispense good (II: 10-19). The fourth oracle (II: 20-23) speaks of the high dignity and importance of Zerubbabel, the royal builder of the Temple, and heir of the Davidic promise.

In all four of these addresses the deterioration of prophecy is apparent in the limitations of Haggai's message, in the narrowness of his appeal, and even in the tedious movement of his style. He has been called the most matter of fact of all the prophets—*omnino prosaicus*, as Bishop Lowth called him. He seems to think of the religious influences of the Messianic age as all radiating from a material Temple, and, instead of rousing the people from their moral lethargy by such trumpet blasts of idealism as Amos and Isaiah had poured forth, Haggai mainly appeals to motives of temporal expediency. He urges the people to the duty of building the Temple by a promise of material prosperity. You have had drought and poverty; therefore build the Temple. He proposes an external remedy for an external disadvantage. Yet though Haggai, compared with his greater predecessors, seems barren in style and commonplace in thought, we must beware of underestimating the importance of the work he did. A temple was a necessary rallying point for the religion of Israel in that time of discouragement and disillusion. And



Haggai accomplished through his contagious enthusiasm what he set out to do far more successfully than did the greater prophets of an earlier age. This was partly, of course, because his aim was lower. It is easier to build a temple than to reform a nation, easier to start a drive than to arouse a sluggish civic conscience. Still, Haggai's was no mean accomplishment. A temple to an ancient Semitic people was an absolutely essential condition of maintaining its religious life, and without Haggai's insistence the second temple would not have been completed.

#### ANALYSIS OF HAGGAI

- I. Opening Message—A summons to build the Temple, I.
- II. Second Message—encouragement, II:1-9.
- III. Third Message—warning and hope, II:10-19.
- IV. Fourth Message—The Davidic prince, and the “shaking” of the nations, II:20-23.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON HAGGAI

Bennett and Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 254-256.

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 343-344.

Farrar, *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 185-195.

Fowler, *History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 278-279.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 233-236.

#### QUESTIONS ON HAGGAI

Comment upon the contrast between the return from Exile as predicted by Deutero-Isaiah and the actual return in 537 B.C.

What were the chief events of Persian history between 538 and 520 B.C.?

What local conditions tended to the discouragement of the returned exiles?

To what motive for renewed zeal in building the Temple does Haggai appeal? (See II:5-9.)

To what does the prophet attribute the hardships of the Jewish colonists? (See I:9; II:11-14.)

What is the Messianic hope of Haggai?

What is the substance of his message?

## CHAPTER XV

### ZECHARIAH, I—VIII, THE BEGINNING OF APOCALYPSE

SOMEWHAT more interesting, as well as more spiritual-minded, was Haggai's younger contemporary Zechariah. Like Haggai's, his first prophecy belongs to the second year of Darius (B.C. 520). The remainder of his genuine prophecy was delivered two years later in the fourth year of Darius (VII:1).<sup>57</sup> Like Haggai, Zechariah tried to inspire a discouraged people to proceed with the work of rebuilding the Temple, and to restore confidence in the future of the nation and of God's kingdom; but the contents are richer, and the form more interesting.

The latter consists in great part of visions, of which there are eight, described as having been seen in one night, and to which explanations are added. They show Zechariah to have been a student of Ezekiel's prophecies, and to have been even more prone than he to the use of the imagery of symbolic vision. Angelic horsemen, horns cut down, a man with a rod measuring Jerusalem, the high priest

<sup>57</sup> Chapters IX to XIV are now pretty generally recognized as constituting an appendix to the prophecy, written by one, or more, probably by two, anonymous prophets. The reference to Greece (IX: 13) unless it be regarded as an editorial gloss, points unmistakably to a date in the Greek period after 333 B.C., when Greece under Alexander the Great first began to figure as a world power.

clothed in filthy garments and accused by the Adversary, a golden candelabrum filled with oil from two olive trees, a great roll of a book flying through the air, and bearing a list of the proscribed sinners, a woman representing sin, placed in an ephah and carried away to Babylon "to her own place," chariots with many-colored horses, all these appear in Zechariah's strange visions. Together they set forth his conception of the reorganized commonwealth. In his idea it is to be a dual government in which the sacred and the secular elements, represented by Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, the civil governor, are to have coöperative functions. "These," his interpreting angel declares, "are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (IV:11-14).

The function of the interpreting angel, who explains to the prophet the meaning of the successive visions, is a new thing in prophecy, and marks the beginning of the time when prophecy loses its sense of immediate communion with God. Hitherto the prophets' authority had been contained in the declaration, "Thus saith the Lord"; but between them and Zechariah had intervened the teaching of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, who had taught that God was a transcendent deity. As a result of such an exaltation, the distance between God and sinful man had been immeasurably increased. Hence arose the need for intermediaries between God and man; and there developed gradually in consequence the elaborate system of angelology characteristic of later Judaism, with its orders and ranks of angels, and its arch-angels in charge of particular peoples (Dan. X: 18-20 and XII:1).

There is a hint of such a change in the prophecies of Ezekiel, where angels appear, though not under

that name. They are in human form, and he calls them "men." They seem to be objective embodiments of the Word of God. Such are they who execute God's wrath upon Jerusalem (Ezek. IX) and one who acts as the interpreter of God's will to the prophet, and instructs him in the details of the building of the city and Temple (Ezek. XL:3 ff.). Between these personifications of the voice of God and the intricate angelology of later Judaism as found in the Book of Daniel and the apocryphal Book of Enoch, the symbolic visions of Zechariah furnish a link.

In the first place he calls these intermediaries "angels" (*male'akim*—Messengers).<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he is the first to imply that there are orders and ranks of angels. Before the angelic judge in the fourth vision are subordinate angels, whose duty it is to execute his sentences (III:4). Again, in the third vision, the interpreting angel does not communicate directly with God, but receives his words from another angel who has "come forth" (II:3, 4). Here, too, is the first appearance of the angel as intercessor. Whereas Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah had themselves directly interceded with God for Israel, it is here the interpreting angel who intercedes, and who in turn receives the divine comfort (I:12). Here we find what is probably the first hint of the identification of special angels with different peoples, which we later find in Daniel and some of the extra-canonical books.

Zechariah is the first prophet also to speak of Satan, or rather of "the Satan" (III:1) for the word has not yet become what it afterward became (I Chron. XXI:1), a proper name, but has the

<sup>58</sup> The Greek word is ἄγγελοι, from which we get our English word angels through the late Latin *angelus*.

definite article, and the meaning of "the adversary" or "the accuser." Here also Zechariah furnishes a link between the older thought in Israel regarding the origin of evil and the later designation of Satan as the author of it. Formerly evil, as well as good, was thought of as coming directly from God. Thus David's impulse to number Israel is in one of the historical books ascribed to God (II Sam. XXIV:1).<sup>59</sup> Again, the "lying spirit" that enticed Ahab to go to his death at Ramoth-Gilead went forth from Yahveh's presence (I Kings XXII:20 ff.). Similarly in the Book of Zechariah, as in the Book of Job (Job I:6 ff.), "the Satan" is one of the divine powers who receive their commission from God. He is God's prosecutor in the supreme court before which Joshua in the filthy garments of his degradation appears (III:1). Yet there is a hint of malevolence in the portrayal of "the Satan," which calls forth God's rebuke, and the acquittal and rehabilitation of the prisoner. It is this malevolence in the portrayal that links the prophet's thought of the Satan, the accuser of man, with the later conception of Satan as the adversary of God, who divides with him the rule of the world, and thwarts wherever possible his benevolent purposes.

Finally, we see in Zechariah the fuller development of the tendency to apocalypse, which has been noted as one of the characteristics of post-exilic literature. In the case of earlier prophets "the word of the Lord" comes to them, and they declare it. Here symbolic visions are shown to the seer, and their meaning is communicated to him by the interpreting angel. This form of prophecy is therefore

<sup>59</sup> It is worthy of note that in a later historical book the numbering of Israel is said to have been suggested by Satan (I Chron. XXI:1).

called apocalyptic, from the Greek word meaning a revelation or an unveiling. Here we find eight of these apocalyptic visions, which, like dissolving views, or the gorgeous figures in a kaleidoscope, change and merge insensibly into new combinations of oriental symbolism. Now the symbols are suggested by the elaborate system of postal communication of the Persian empire, the most complete in the ancient world<sup>60</sup>; now by the war chariots of Persia, which are made the symbols of God's wrath against the nations.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH V—VIII

- I. Appeal to the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, I:1-6.
- II. Vision of the angelic horsemen who announce that the "shaking" predicted by Haggai (Hag. II:21-22) has not occurred, I:7-17.
- III. Vision of the four smiths. Israel's oppressive foes are to be humbled, I:18-21.
- IV. Vision of the man with the measuring line who is forbidden to fix any limits for the future city, II:1-5.
- V. An exilic lyric on the Restoration resembling those of Deutero-Isaiah and probably inserted either by Zechariah or by a later editor as expressive of the emotion aroused by the preceding vision, II:6-13.
- VI. Vision of the high priest accused by Satan, but purified, acquitted, and about to be filled with God's spirit. Here the Messiah is identified as Zerubbabel, III.
- VII. Vision of the seven-branched candelabrum supplied with oil from the two olive trees,

<sup>60</sup> See Heroditus, *History*, VIII: 98.



symbolic of God's watchful care of Zerubbabel and Joshua, the civil and religious leaders of the community, IV.

VIII. Vision of the flying roll. The land is to be cleansed of sinners, V:1-4.

IX. Vision of the hag (wickedness) shut up in an ephah and carried away to the land of Shinar (Babylon) where she belongs. Sin will be banished from the Judah of the future, V:5-11.

X. Vision of the four chariots, which come forth from the "mountains of brass" (symbolic of God's unchanging purpose) and go through the earth to execute his wrath upon the nations, VI:1-8.

XI. The symbolic crowning of Zerubbabel, representing the union of the high priestly with the regal dignity in the Messiah's person, VI:9-15.

XII. On fasting and true religion, VII.

XIII. Glowing promises for the future of Jerusalem, inspired by the rapid progress of the Temple building, VIII.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON ZECHARIAH I—VIII

Baldwin, *Our Modern Debt to Israel*, pp. 81-82.

Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 236-241.

Farrar, *The Minor Prophets*, pp. 196-207.

Fiske, *The Great Epic of Israel*, pp. 219-222.

Harper, *Post-Exilic Prophets*, pp. 53-92.

McFadyen, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 344-346.

Orelli, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, pp. 301-381.

Piepenbring, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 253-256.

Sanders and Kent, *Messages of the Later Prophets*, pp. 204-233.

Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, pp. 310 ff.

#### QUESTIONS ON ZECHARIAH I—VIII

What is the probable date of the Book?

What noticeable difference is there between the prophetic methods of Haggai and Zechariah?

What do you understand by apocalypse?

What are the sources of Zechariah's symbolism?

Explain the meaning of the following symbols:

the four horns, the seven-branched candlestick, the two olive trees, the flying roll, the woman in the ephah, the four chariots, and the mountains of brass.

Which of the visions do you consider most impressive, and why?

Comment upon "the Satan" (III:1) and compare with Job I-II.

Comment upon the angels of Zechariah's visions and account for the growing belief in angels here exemplified.

What change in the prophetic idea of the Messiah is mirrored in Zechariah?

## CHAPTER XVI

### OBADIAH, THE VOICE OF VENGEANCE

AFTER the captivity, two ideals were present to the Jewish mind. One was that of Deutero-Isaiah with his glowing vision of a Messianic kingdom embracing all the nations of the earth as fellow servants and worshipers with Israel of the one true God. The other was that which developed under the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah—the conception of an Israel consecrated to God's service, rigidly separated from other nations by observance of the law, and utterly avoiding as ritual pollution any contact with the heathen. The latter ideal became increasingly popular as time went on; and, as a result of it, the Jews naturally came to regard the heathen as enemies of God's people, and as, therefore, objects of the divine vengeance.

This vindictive temper finds fierce expression in the little oracle of Obadiah, the shortest of the prophetic books. It is a shout of execration against Edom. The occasion is some great disaster which had come upon the Edomites. This is thought to have been the conquering and expulsion of the people from their ancient home by the Nabataean Arabs.<sup>61</sup> The Jewish grievance against the Edomites was of long standing, dating at least from 586 B.C., when the Edomites helped the Chaldeans de-

<sup>61</sup> In I Macc. V: 65 we read that they settled after their expulsion in Hebron, southwest of Jerusalem.

stroy Jerusalem.<sup>62</sup> Here Jewish resentment finds full expression. The oracle is a veritable hymn of hate. Using an older oracle or Edom's fall as a text (vv. 1-4, 8 ff.), the prophet showed most vividly how the older prophecy was being fulfilled:

As thou hast done,  
It shall be done to thee,  
Thy dealing shall return  
Upon thine own head.

v. 15.

The prophecy falls into two clearly marked divisions, of which the first (1-16) denounces destruction to Edom, and the second (17-21) predicts the restoration of Israel. The destruction, the prophet sees as a just retribution for Edom's inhumanity shown in its "violence done to thy brother Jacob."

In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that strangers carried away his substance, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.

v. 11.

In the second section is given the contrasting picture of Mount Zion, delivered from her enemies and holy:

And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall burn among them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining to the house of Esau, for Yahveh hath spoken it.

vv. (17, 18).

<sup>62</sup> See for an expression of Jewish feeling roused by that event Psalm CXXXVII. The psalm is a song of the Exile, and should be compared in its spirit with Milton's sonnet, "On the Late Massacre."

## ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

A vision of vengeance upon Edom.

- I. The news of Edom's approaching humiliation, v. 1.
- II. Yahveh's reason for humbling Edom, vv. 2-4.
- III. Edom's reputed wisdom cannot save her, vv. 5-9.
- IV. Edom's disaster, a just recompense for her conduct in the day of Judah's distress (when Jerusalem was captured in 586 B.C.), vv. 10-14.
- V. In the coming day of Yahveh upon the nations Judah will triumph visibly over Edom, vv. 15-21.

## SUGGESTED READINGS ON OBADIAH

- Bennett and Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 243-244.
- Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 251-253.
- Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 318-321.
- Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, pp. 163 ff.
- Wood and Grant, *The Bible as Literature*, pp. 89-90.

## QUESTIONS ON OBADIAH

- What is the probable date of the prophecy?
- Which preceding prophet does Obadiah most resemble?
- What does the prophet refer to in verses 13 and 14?
- How old was the feud between Israel and Edom?

Read in Gen. XXV:19-34 the legend of the beginning of it.

Read also Ps. CXXXVII:7-9 and notice how the Edomites and the Babylonians are linked together in that vengeful collect, which is a cry for vengeance upon the enemies of Israel. Compare the spirit of the prophecy and the Psalm with Milton's in the "Sonnet on the late Massacre in Piemont."

Where was Edom?

What seems to be the relation to this prophecy of Malachi I:1-5?

Compare Obadiah vv. 1-9 with Jer. XLIX:7-22.

Does Obadiah seem to be partly quoting and partly commenting upon the older oracle? What relation does he point out between national sin and retribution?

Comment on the assertion, "Israel's fate has been to work out their calling in the world through antipathies rather than by sympathies."

What contrast is apparent between the spirit of the Book of Obadiah and that of Isaiah, XL—LV?

## CHAPTER XVII

### ISAIAH LVI TO LXVI, TRITO-ISAIAH

TO ABOUT the same time as Obadiah belongs the magnificent picture in Isaiah LXIII:1-6 of the Divine Warrior returning from executing vengeance upon the Edomites. It is one of the most impressive delineations in Hebrew prophecy. The awed questions of the prophet, and the stately but laconic answers of the Lord make it perhaps the most effective example of prophetic dialogue. Moreover, it helps us to date the whole group of anonymous prophecies which comprise the last ten chapters of our Book of Isaiah, and to which the term Trito-Isaiah has sometimes been applied.<sup>63</sup> That they reflect different periods from that of Chapters XL—LV has long been recognized. The frequent mention of the Temple proves them to have been written after the return from the Exile, while the mood of discouragement which they imply suggests the period shortly before the reforms of Nehemiah, or about 500 B.C.

It seems to have been a time of discouragement and of slackened enthusiasm. The dynastic hopes of Zechariah which had centered in Zerubbabel had been disappointed. Darius had reorganized his empire on a new system, appointing in place of the native provincial leaders, hitherto recognized by Cyrus, satraps or governors wholly unrelated to the people governed. This change undoubtedly accounts

<sup>63</sup> On the question of Trito-Isaiah see Cheyne's *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah*, p. 310 ff.



for the otherwise unexplainable disappearance of Zerubbabel and his descendants. They never had a chance to rule Judah.

In their exultant tone of assurance, as also in their breadth of outlook and their catholicity of spirit, these ten chapters resemble the prophecies of the Second Isaiah:

Cast ye up, cast ye up,  
Prepare the way,  
Take up the stumbling block  
Out of the way of my people.  
Is. LVII: 14.

The promised glorification of Israel has been hitherto deferred only because of the sins of the people:

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.  
Is. LIX: 1.

But upon repentant Israel shall come God's favor

as a rushing stream which the breath of Yahveh driveth. And a redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.  
Is. LIX: 19, 20.

Then shall dawn for the nation the new day of eternal light:

Arise, shine! for thy light is come,  
And the glory of Yahveh hath risen upon thee.  
For, lo! darkness doth cover the earth,  
And gross darkness the peoples;  
But Yahveh doth rise upon thee,  
And his glory appeareth upon thee,  
And nations come to thy light.  
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.  
LX: 1 ff.

In the bright day about to dawn, the Temple shall become no sanctuary for the Jews alone, but "shall be called an house of prayer for all the nations" (LVI:7). Even the eunuch and the foreigner from whatever nation that joins himself to Yahveh, and loves his name and service, shall be given an inheritance in His house "better than that of sons and daughters, even an everlasting name that shall not be cut off" (LVI:5).

The only condition imposed is that they shall do righteousness and forsake not the *torah* of their God. Like the earliest prophets, this one condemns ritual as a substitute for righteousness. Speaking of fasting, he ironically asks:

Is such the fast I choose—  
 A day for a man to afflict his soul,  
 To bow down his head as a rush,  
 To spread sackcloth and ashes under him?  
 Wilt thou call this a fast  
 An acceptable day to Yahveh?

Is not this the fast I have chosen:  
 To loose the bonds of wickedness,  
 To undo the bands of the yoke  
 To let the oppressed go free,  
 That ye break every yoke?  
 Is it not to break thy bread to the hungry,  
 And the poor to bring to thy house,  
 When thou seest the naked, to cover him,  
 And to hide not thyself from thine own flesh.

LVIII: 5-7.

If such be the fasts they keep, Yahveh will make Israel like a watered garden:

If thou wilt remove from the midst of thee the yoke,  
 The putting forth the fingers and speaking wickedly,  
 And wilt share thy bread with the hungry,  
 And satisfy the afflicted soul—  
 Then shall thy light stream forth in the darkness

And thine obscurity be as the noonday;  
 And Yahveh shall guide thee continually,  
 And satisfy thy soul in dry places.  
 And make strong thy bones  
 And thou shalt be like a watered garden.

LVIII: 9-11.

In the prophet's picture of the new golden age about to begin when these conditions of pure worship are fulfilled we have (in Chapter LX) what is probably the most ideally beautiful description of the Hebrew utopia. It is to be a time of universal peace:

Thy gates shall be open continually,  
 They shall not be shut day nor night;

.....

.....

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,  
 Desolation nor destruction within thy borders;  
 But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,  
 And thy gates Praise.

vv. 11 and 18.

The nations will voluntarily submit themselves to Jerusalem's spiritual leadership:

And the sons of them that afflicted thee  
 Shall come bending unto thee;  
 And all they that despised thee  
 Shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.

v. 14.

They will bring for the adornment of the place of God's dwelling their wealth and service:

And strangers shall build up thy walls,  
 And their kings shall minister unto thee:

.....

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,  
 The fir tree, the pine, and the box tree together;  
 To beautify the place of my sanctuary,  
 And I will make the place of my feet glorious.

vv. 10 and 13.

God Himself is to be the ruler of the purified commonwealth, and in his Presence:

Thy sun shall no more go down,  
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself:  
For the Lord shall be thine everlasting light,  
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.  
v. 20.

The tyranny of oriental despots, for centuries only too familiar to the Jewish people, is to be replaced by a beneficent rule of infinite goodness. Verse 17 should be literally rendered:

I will appoint Peace as thy government,  
And Righteousness as thy ruler.

Like their ruler, the people are to be "all righteous" (v. 21) and are to be very many:

The little one shall become a thousand,  
And the small one, a strong nation:  
I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time.  
v. 22.

SUGGESTED READINGS ON ISAIAH LVI-LXVI

- Brewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 242-250.  
Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, pp. 300-313.  
Houghton, *Hebrew Life and Thought* (The Hebrew Utopia, Chapter X), pp. 300-327.  
Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 67-68.  
Smith, G. A., *Isaiah XL-LXVI*, pp. 378 ff.  
Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophets and their Times*, pp. 207-214.

## ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH LVI—LXVI

- I. Ground of fellowship with God's people, LVI:1-8.
- II. Denunciation of rulers and false worshipers, LVI:9-57.  
Possibly a transposed pre-exilic oracle. Notice the resemblance to the tone of Hosea.
- III. Social service, and Sabbath observance, LVIII.
- IV. Social crime and future salvation, LIX.
- V. Jerusalem's future glory, LX—LXII.
  - A. Apostrophe to Jerusalem, symbol of the sunrise, LX.
  - B. The messenger of good news, LXI:1-3.
  - C. Israel recognized as a kingdom of priests, LXI:4—LXII.
- VI. The Divine Warrior from Edom, LXIII:1-6.
- VII. The prophet's intercession, LXIII:7—LXIV.
- VIII. Jerusalem's future glory, LXV-LXVI.
  - A. A new dispensation in Jerusalem, LXV.
  - B. True worship and superstition, LXVI:1-5, 17-18a.
  - C. Jerusalem the religious center of the world, LXVI:6-16, 18b-24.

## QUESTIONS ON ISAIAH LVI—LXVI

- What difference in tone is evident here between Chapters XL—LV and Chapters LVI—LXVI?
- What allusions point unmistakably to a later date for LVI—LXVI?
- What indications appear as to the social, political, and religious conditions of the time? (See

LVII:1; LVIII:3; LVII:5; LVI:9,11;  
LIX:3,7,11; LX:10; LXIV:10,11; LXIII:18.)

What are the elements in the author's picture of the future golden age? (See LIX:17-19; LIX:21; LXVI:20; LX:3,10,11,14; LXVI:23; LX:18-22; LXI:1-3; LXII:12; LXVI:22,23; LXVI:18,19.)

Compare these features with those mentioned in Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, which represents a Roman ideal of the future "golden age."

Read Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and notice echoes of Is. LXIII:1-6.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MALACHI, THE PROPHET AS LEGALIST

THE Book of Malachi is anonymous. The word means "my messenger," and was prefixed to the oracle by some editor to whom it was suggested by the statement, "I will send my messenger before my face" (III:1).

The contents of the prophecy are closely connected with the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah 458-433 B.C. These reformers had provided for the maintenance of the services of the Temple, and had prohibited marriage with foreigners. With both these regulations the prophet was in full sympathy. Hence, the probable date of the book is between 450-440 B.C. The opening reference to Edom's disaster helps also to fix the date as subsequent to the driving of the Edomites from their home by the Nabatæans about the middle of the Fifth Century.

The message falls into three clearly marked sections, preceded by a brief introduction (I:2-5) on the love of God for Judah:

a. Denunciation of the sins of the priests (I:6—II:9)

b. Denunciation of the sins of the people (II:10—III:15)

c. Prophecy of the day of the Lord and its forerunner (III:16—IV:6).

Throughout, the book is written in prose, and is entirely lacking in the passionate vehemence so



characteristic of the earlier prophets. The author continually employs the dialectic form of writing, with the machinery of repeated question and answer.

Quite typical of his style is the passage in which the prophet denounces the priests:

A son honoreth his father and a servant his master: but if I be a father, where is my honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord Sabaoth unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar . . . thinking, the table of the Lord is contemptible. And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil; and when ye offer the lame and the sick, it is no evil. Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee? or show thee favor? . . . Ye have brought the blind, the lame, and the sick: thus ye bring the offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord.

I: 6-8.

The failure of the nation to realize the high hopes that had been raised by the predictions of Deutero-Isaiah the prophet lays to Israel itself. The people were not yet fully worthy of their great future. The only way they could become so was, in his opinion, by increasing their works of piety. In contrast to the ethical demands of the great prophets, Malachi announces as the pre-requisites for God's favor:

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Yahveh of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

III: 10.

On the whole, the Book of Malachi presents a narrow and legalistic view of religious obligation, but there is one striking passage to be noted as marking the beginning of a respect for heathen religion later to appear in a more fully developed form in the

Book of Jonah. Most emphatically does this nameless prophet contrast Israel's neglect of God with the reverence paid to him by the heathen,

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered unto my name and a pure offering, for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith Yahveh of hosts.

I: II.

The teaching of this passage seems to be that these negligent priests were not to suppose that Yahveh was dependent upon them, and upon the Temple at Jerusalem for acceptable service, for the world was his temple; and even the heathen were learning to fear him. In its recognition that the world was God's temple, the passage seems like an anticipation of the words of Israel's greatest teacher made to the woman of Samaria. "Believe me, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John IV:21). That such an anticipation, based upon a generous, even catholic, recognition of the purity of heathen sacrifices, should occur in this book which lays such stress on the necessity of a pure sacrifice, and in general upon the Temple ritual, is nothing less than amazing.

Malachi's ringing message of reform prepared the way for the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. This was a work of reform and reorganization culminating in October of the year 444 B.C., when at a great assembly the people bound themselves by an oath to live according to the law which Ezra read to them; exactly as they had done one hundred and seventy-

seven years before in the time of Josiah with reference to Deuteronomy.

This solemn league and covenant contrasted oddly enough with the "new covenant" of which Jeremiah had spoken (Jer. XXXI:33). Instead of being written in the hearts of the individuals, it was written in a book. The book to which they swore allegiance was the body of legislation, written in Babylon a half century earlier, which we know as the Levitical, or priestly, code as found in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. The purpose of the writers was to make Israel a holy people. In this attempt they tried to make (first) all the national life center in the Temple and its ritual; (second) to guard the Temple from pollution from any source; (third) to make its worship attractive; (fourth) to make provision for the ceremonial purity of the priesthood; (fifth) to insure the ceremonial cleanliness of the people by strict rules of purification, and by dietary laws; (sixth) to provide an elaborate system of sacrificial offerings; (seventh) to prohibit marriage with the heathen; (eighth) to stress the rigid observance of the Sabbath, of circumcision and other institutional acts.

Though the purpose of the writers was a noble one, the effect of its adoption as an ideal was a deterioration from prophetic standards. It defined duty in terms of ceremonial rather than in terms of spirituality, and tended to further the impulse toward separation and exclusiveness which became so marked a feature of later Jewish thought. Doubtless Cornill is entirely right, however, in his assertion<sup>64</sup> that it was only by this very hardening and exclusiveness that Israel was able to withstand the insidious encroachments of Hellenism, to which

<sup>64</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 162, 163.

during the next century it was exposed. It was because of the armor of its own exclusiveness that Israel alone of the nations of the East was able, not only to resist the attacks of Hellenism, but to absorb into itself the good of Hellenism, and thus to enrich and strengthen its own existence.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF MALACHI

- I. The Editor's superscription, I:1.
- II. God's punishment of Edom shows his discriminating love for Israel, I:2-5.
- III. Yet the priests dishonor God
  - A. offering blemished sacrifices,
  - B. regarding their duties as drudgery,
  - C. perverting the law, I:6—II:9.
- IV. The people also break the covenant with Yahveh,
  - A. divorcing their Jewish wives to marry foreign women, II:10-16.
- V. Therefore God's purifying judgment will come suddenly to cleanse the priesthood and all evildoers, II:17—III:6.
- VI. Only the conscientious paying of what is due to God will bring his blessing, III:7-12.
- VII. The coming day of the Lord, and the "Book of remembrance," III:13—IV:3.
- VIII. Obey the law. Preceding the day of the Lord, a second Elijah will come to adjust all social discords, IV:4-6.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON MALACHI

- Bennett and Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 264-267.
- Fiske, *The Great Epic of Israel*, pp. 222-224.

Harper, *Post-Exilic Prophets*, pp. 119-147.

Orelli, *The Twelve Minor Prophets*, pp. 382-398.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 69-71.

#### QUESTIONS ON MALACHI

Comment on the title.

Compare the attitude of the prophet toward the Temple and the Law with that of earlier prophets, as shown in Amos V:21-24 and Is. I:10-17; and account for the difference.

Paraphrase I:6—II:9.

What social and religious conditions does the prophet attack?

Collect the examples of dialectic (question and answer), and show what the author tries in each instance to prove.

What single instance of religious breadth of view does the author show?

In what way did Malachi prepare the way for the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah?

Describe these reforms.

In what way did the covenant of 444 B.C. differ from the one predicted by Jeremiah?

Compare Mal. II:1-17 with the use made of it in Mat. XVII:9-13.

Is the older passage really a promise or a threat?

Against whom is the threat uttered?

## CHAPTER XIX

### JOEL, THE PROPHET OF THE LOCUST PLAGUE

A PERFECT example of apocalyptic prophecy is the Book of Joel, which has been called the finest example of apocalyptic prophecy.<sup>65</sup> It is an unveiling, through symbolic vision, of the destiny of Israel in an undetermined future. Because of its apocalyptic character, it is difficult to determine its date. It used to be regarded as the oldest of the prophetic books, being assigned to the early part of the reign of Joash of Judah, about 830 B.C.; but modern scholars incline to regard it as a product of the Fourth Century B.C. Their conclusions are based upon the author's mention of the Greeks (III:6), his complete silence regarding the Northern Kingdom, his use of the term Israel in the post-exilic sense as meaning Judah, his description of God's people as "scattered among the nations," his silence as to idolatry, and his interest in the maintenance of the Temple service.

The Book opens with an account of a plague of locusts, which are described not only in the ravages they commit upon the land, but in their ominous foreshadowing of the coming "Day of the Lord." They are treated as the heralds of God's near judgment on the nation. Yet at the last moment, when the devastating march of the locusts has actually reached the doomed city, the calling of

<sup>65</sup> See J. H. Gardiner in *The Bible as Literature*, p. 254.

a solemn assembly and the fasting and prayer of the penitent people avert God's righteous anger, and "Yahveh had pity on his people" (II:18). There follows the divine promise of the rich and manifold happiness in store for Judah and of destruction to her enemies. There will be no more drought nor famine. God is in the midst of his people. Never again shall they be ashamed (II:19-27). Moreover there will be an outpouring of his spirit upon young and old, even upon the servants and the slaves. This will be accompanied by strange signs and portents, "wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire, and pillars of smoke," as a prelude to "the great and terrible day of Yahveh." But "those that call upon the name of Yahveh (the Jews) shall be delivered." Only upon the heathen enemies of Israel no mercy will be shown. They will be gathered together into the valley of the judgment of Yahveh (Jehoshaphat), there to give account of their cruelties in selling the Jews into slavery to gratify their luxury and lust. There under darkened sky will the despoilers of Judah be slain by the angelic hosts, trampled in the full winepress of God's wrath, while Yahveh "roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem" (II:28—III:16). Finally the land shall be made supernaturally fertile; a stream of blessing shall flow from the Temple, which shall water the valley of acacias; Judah and Jerusalem shall be freed from the feet of strangers, and their innocent blood shall be cleansed (III:17-21).

Two important changes in prophetic thought are to be noted. Joel sets forth the inspiring idea that in the golden age to come everyone in Israel, high and low alike, will become a channel of divine influence. The other idea is an expression of the vengeful spirit, developed in post-exilic Judaism, that



Yahveh's judgment will be a sweeping one against "the nations."

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF JOEL.

- I. Title, I:1.
- II. The visitation of the locust plague, I, 2—II:11.
- III. At the last moment, repentance, II:12-17.
- IV. Restoration of fertility, II:18-27.
- V. The outpouring of God's spirit, II:28-32.
- VI. The judgment upon the nations, III:1-16a.
- VII. Yahveh a refuge for his people, III:16b-21.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON JOEL

- Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 395-398.  
 Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, pp. 316-326.  
 Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 275-276.  
 Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 72-73.  
 Wood and Grant, *The Bible as Literature*, pp. 93-94.

#### QUESTIONS ON JOEL

- What are the reasons for assigning a late date to the Book?  
 What about the influence of earlier prophets upon Joel?  
 (Compare in this connection Joel III:16 and Amos I:2; Joel III:10 and Is. II:4; Mic. IV:3; Joel II:2 and Zeph. I:15; Joel I:15 and Is. XIII:6.)  
 How does the Book show the dominance of priestly influence?

Notice, in this connection, the means urged by the prophet for averting calamity.

Does the promised outpouring of God's spirit (II:28) probably refer to any others than Jews? Notice the use made of this passage by St. Peter (Acts II:14-21).

What tendency of later Judaism is shown in Joel's picture of the "Day of Yahveh"?

Why should the Book be called an apocalyptic vision?

Notice the similarity of spirit between the Book of Joel and the Book of Esther. The two come from about the same period.

## CHAPTER XX

### TWO APOCALYPTIC VISIONS—ZECHARIAH IX—XIV AND ISAIAH XXIV—XXVII

IN THE preceding apocalypse of Joel and in the two which follow we are quite evidently concerned with a different world and with a different point of view from that which we find in prophecy preceding. The background is the Greek period, after Alexander the Great destroyed the Persian monarchy by his victories at Issus in 333 B.C. and at Arbela in 331 B.C., and Greece, consequently, succeeded to the mastery of the oriental world. The Greek rule was a different kind of domination from any that the oriental world had known hitherto. In contrast to the Persians, who had shown themselves tolerant and kindly to all native institutions, the Greeks aimed, not only to conquer armies and acquire territory, but to conquer minds and cultures. They tried, by founding a new Greece in Asia, to enlarge the Greek world. "The Orient," says Wellhausen, "became their America." In this attempt to expand the Greek world they founded, at strategic points throughout the empire, Greek cities settled by Alexander's veterans and the horde of migratory Greeks that followed in his wake, in which a kind of bastard Greek culture, characterized by sensuality and materialism, flourished.

Between this degenerate Hellenism and Judaism there could be no alliance. The Jews' emphasis upon domestic morality, and their intense devotion to the service of the Temple seemed alike contemp-

tible to those familiar with the brilliant, voluptuous life of the Hellenic cities. The Jewish hatred of sensuality on the other hand led them to view with horror the sports and exercises of the gymnasium, and the attendant licentiousness. Hellenism protested against the narrowness, barrenness, and intolerance of Judaism; Judaism in turn condemned the godlessness and immorality of Hellenism. Yet Hellenism was seemingly triumphant. It appealed strongly to the intellectual, social, and æsthetic sense of conquered oriental peoples, and, in the debased form that it assumed in the East, to their passions. The natural consequence was a marked accentuation of the very narrowness and intolerance against which Hellenism protested. Instead of accepting the idea of Deutero-Isaiah (LII:13—LIII:12) with its picture of triumph through the discipline of suffering, not through conquest, the Jews preferred to think of a coming day of retribution when Israel's arrogant enemies would be annihilated, and faithful Israel established in prosperity and dominion.

This belief that God would bring about a realization of the hope of Israel through the exercise of his overwhelming and catastrophic power became one of the most marked characteristics of prophetic thinking in this Greek period, and, consequently, one of the most persistent features of apocalypse. By destroying Israel's foes, and only by that means, they thought, could God give her the chance; which otherwise seemed hopeless, of establishing the kingdom of God on earth. It was the apparent hopelessness of remaking the existing social and political order that caused the prophets of the Greek period to fix their eyes on the remote future. Their interests were no longer primarily ethical and social, but eschatological. Despairing of the present, they

hoped for the golden age only in the future. In this tendency to postpone the dawn of the golden age, we see the source of the Christian theological belief in the millennium. The apocalyptic writers of the Greek period looked forward to an eternal kingdom of God on the present earth. Gradually this gave place in later Jewish and Christian thought to the expectation of its establishment in a new earth, cleansed and purified by fire, in which, after "the first resurrection" (Rev. XX:4), the faithful would reign with the Messiah for a thousand years.

#### ZECHARIAH IX—XIV

The last five chapters of Zechariah (IX—XIV), most critics agree are an apocalypse belonging to the years when, after the division of Alexander's empire, Syria and Egypt were contesting for the possession of Palestine. It is a vision of a Judaized world empire, ruled from Jerusalem by the "prince of peace." The apocalypse consists of four distinct sections:

- a. The promise of the Messianic kingdom and the restoration of Israel, IX:1—XI:3.
- b. The allegory of the shepherds, XI:4-17, XIII:7-9.
- c. A vision of the deliverance and purification of Jerusalem, XII:1—XIII:6.
- d. The elevation of Jerusalem as the center of holiness to the world, XIV:1-21.

The most striking passages are those describing the coming of the prince of peace, and the final picture of the Holy City. In the former (IX:9-10) the prince, like the Servant of Yahveh in Deutero-Isaiah, is represented as coming, not upon a horse, the symbol of war, but riding the ass, which is not the symbol of humility, as some have mistakenly

supposed, but of peace. And in the latter passage, describing the ideal conditions in restored Jerusalem, the complete consecration of all its activities is symbolized by the statement that upon the very bells of the horses will be engraved the words "Holiness unto Yahveh," and the very kitchen pots of Jerusalem will be requisitioned and consecrated for the use of the vast throngs who will come up to Jerusalem for the annual feasts of Israel.

#### ISAIAH XXIV—XXVII

To the years immediately following Alexander's conquest belong in all probability also the apocalyptic prophecy comprised in Isaiah XXIV—XXVII. This apocalypse reaches loftier heights than any preceding, being characterized by a breadth and tenderness of sympathy unknown to them. The curtain rises on the usual apocalyptic scene of the world turned upside down. "Behold! Yahveh doth empty the earth and waste it; He turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof" (XXIV:1).

Throughout this apocalypse we notice a curious alternation of ecstasy and gloom, which is a characteristic feature, not only of apocalypse, but of prophecy in general, and to which the term "pendulum movement" has been applied. Grim announcements of world-wide catastrophe (XXIV:3, 13, 19, 20), of the destruction of some foreign city (XXV:1-5), or of the crushing of Moab (XXV:9-12), alternate with delineations of God's loving-kindness to Israel (XXV:6-8, XXVI:1-7), when he shall wipe away tears from all faces, and take away the reproach of his people, and keep them "in perfect peace." The most striking example of God's power and

goodness is the repopulation of the land with her dead sons and daughters (XXVI:19). With the passage already cited from Ezekiel, the vision of the valley of the dry bones, (XXXVII:1-14), this is the clearest indication we have previous to the time of the writing of the Book of Daniel of the dawning belief in personal immortality.

A striking and beautiful feature of this apocalypse is the four songs (XXV:1-5; XXVI:1-19; XXVII:2-6; XXVII:7-11), which express the emotional response to the announcements of the coming salvation of Zion. Of these, the second, the Song of Salvation, has been the source of many Christian hymns, including Toplady's "Rock of Ages." The first strophe is most familiar:

We have a strong city;  
 Salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks.  
 Open ye the gates,  
 That the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in.  
 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,  
 Whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.  
 Trust ye in the Lord forever:  
 For in Yahveh, even Yahveh, is a rock of ages.

XXVI: 1-4.

Equally a classic is the charming Vineyard Song, with its short measure of two stresses changing to three in the closing lines of assured faith. The following rendering is that of Dr. A. W. Gordon:

A delightsome vineyard;  
 Sing it a song!  
 I Yahveh do keep it,  
 Each moment I water it;  
 Night and day I keep it,  
 Lest its leafage be missing.

If one would but face me  
 With thistles and thorns,  
 In war would I march on them,  
 I would burn them together.



Else let him cling to my stronghold,  
 And make his peace with me,  
 Yea, make his peace with me!

On that day shall Jacob take root,  
 Israel shall blossom and bud,  
 And shall fill the world with fruit.

XXVII: 2-6.

#### ANALYSIS OF ZECHARIAH X—XIV

An apocalyptic vision of a Jewish world empire ruled from Jerusalem by the Prince of Peace.

- I. The conquest of Israel's foes and the establishment of the kingdom of God, IX.
- II. The restoration of God's scattered people, X.
- III. God's punishment of the unfaithful leaders in Israel, XI, XIII:7-9.
- IV. Jerusalem shall be purified, delivered from its foes, and preserved for a glorious future, XII:1—XIII:6,14.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON ZECHARIAH IX—XIV

Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 419-422.

Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, pp. 325-332.

Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 75-76.

Smith, G. A., *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, Vol. II, pp. 449 ff.

Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophets and Their Times*, pp. 233-236.

#### QUESTIONS ON ZECHARIAH IX—XIV

What use is made of Zech. IX:9 in Matt. XXI:5?  
 Why is this oracle said to mark a deterioration in prophecy?

Under what circumstances did Judaism and Hellenism come into conflict?

Why was alliance between the two faiths impossible?

What was the effect of their antagonism upon Jewish prophetic thinking?

#### ANALYSIS OF ISAIAH XXIV—XXVII

A vision of the imminent Day of the Lord.

- I. In the coming Day of Yahveh his enemies will be overthrown, XXIV-XXV.
- II. Israel, however, will be spared and protected, XXVI:1-XXVII:1.
- III. Israel is Yahveh's vineyard, and he will have mercy, XXVII:2-11.
- IV. Those that have been scattered abroad will be gathered, XXVII:12-13.

#### SUGGESTED READING ON ISAIAH XXIV—XXVII

Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 219-224.

Gordon, *Prophets of the Old Testament*, pp. 333-337.

Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 285-286.

#### QUESTIONS ON ISAIAH XXIV—XXVII

Point out illustrations of pendulum movement in the prophecy.

What evidence appears of the growing belief in immortality?

Comment on the lyrics. Which do you prefer, and why?

## CHAPTER XXI

### JONAH, THE VOICE OF PROTEST AGAINST INTOLERANCE

NO BOOK of the Bible has been treated more unintelligently, and therefore more flippantly, than the Book of Jonah. The mere mention of it usually provokes a smile, for most people see nothing in the book but the grotesque improbabilities of the story. Even these are not fully understood nor appreciated by the average reader. Even the marvel of the swallowing of the prophet by the great fish does not consist, as most people suppose, in the anatomical structure of the whale's œsophagus, but in the suspended digestion of the fish for three days. Besides, the episode is only one, and not the most improbable one, of several prodigies the book narrates. Even more incredible is the account of the wholesale conversion of the people of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah. If any such repudiation of idolatry ever occurred among the Assyrians, it must have been a short-lived reformation, for it has left no trace either in the monuments and inscriptions of ancient Nineveh, or in the historical and prophetic books of Israel. The prophets Isaiah, Zephaniah and Nahum, for example, have much to say of Nineveh, but not a word to indicate that there had been in the time of Jeroboam II (the time of the historical Jonah) any such conversion of the Ninevites to the Hebrew religion. They speak of them always as if they were, and had al-

ways been, idolaters. It seems incredible that such a signal victory for the Jewish faith could have occurred only a few years before their time without their knowledge; and even more incredible that, knowing it, they should have made no allusion to it.

Both the grotesqueness and the historical incredibility of the Book cease to trouble us, however, once we understand it for what it is—a work of fiction, an example of the Jewish *Haggadah*, a legend attached to the name of the historic Jonah. It is not a prophecy, but a fictitious story about a prophet, written by an anonymous author in the Greek period as a protest against the intolerance prevalent in that age. It has the qualities of the story-teller's art, being a well-told short story. It begins abruptly, and the transitions between the different parts are not those of historical narrative, but such abrupt changes as we find in the parable of the prodigal son. It resembles the latter also in its conclusion, for it ends with a question. Both stories are challenges to the reader, and are deliberately planned as a test of character. In neither case does the author tell us the conclusion, but leaves the reader to decide whether the sulky prophet and the sulky elder brother changed their attitude of mind.

Jonah represents the popular Jewish creed. The Jewish anticipations for the Gentiles had been set forth in Zechariah IX—XIV and in the Book of Joel, which pictures their slaughter in the valley of Yahveh's judgment. In adopting this vindictive attitude toward the heathen, the Jewish people definitely repudiated the missionary ideal presented by Deutero-Isaiah. Instead of accepting the latter's view that Israel was elect for the sake of mankind, they preferred to believe that Israel was elect at the expense of mankind, and that the heathen who re-

fused to acknowledge Israel's superiority would be destroyed in the coming "Day of the Lord."

The idea that in its attitude toward God and his world, Israel had been false to its mission was, however, by no means new in prophecy. The prophets uniformly regard the Exile as a punishment inflicted upon Israel for its failure to measure up to the standard the prophets had set for it. Jeremiah, for example, in a passage that sheds a flood of light upon the symbolism of the Book of Jonah represents the punishment of the Exile as a swallowing by a sea monster:

Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured us, he hath crushed us, he hath made us like an empty vessel, he hath, like a monster, swallowed us up, he hath filled his maw with my delicacies, he hath cast me out . . .

But Yahveh replies:

And I will execute Judgment upon Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up.

LI: 34, 44.<sup>66</sup>

Thus it is evident that the symbolism used by the author of Jonah was familiar to the people of the time in which it was written. The Jew of the Third Century needed no commentary to explain the meaning of the story. Israel, called to be a prophet (God's spokesman) to the world, had deliberately refused its high vocation, and had embarked upon the perilous sea of oriental politics "to flee from the presence of the Lord," but God had caused it to be swallowed by the sea monster, Babylon. After an interval, God had spoken to the fish "and it vomited

<sup>66</sup> In several other passages God's conquest of the heathen who had oppressed Israel is represented under the symbolism of the killing of the sea monsters. ( See Is. XXVII: 1; LI: 9; Ps. LXXIV: 12 ff.

out Jonah (Israel) upon the dry land." Upon the miraculous restoration to the home land, Israel was again called to missionary service; but, though it obeyed, it could not look with satisfaction upon God's favor shown to repentant heathen. Jonah, sitting under his booth "in the shade till he might see what would become of the city" (IV:5), and "displeased exceedingly" that the destruction of the city, which he had foretold, had not occurred, perfectly represents the attitude of the prophets of the Greek period, and partly justifies Renan's interpretation of the Book as a stinging satire against the prophets.

There is more in it, however, than merely a protest against the prevalent Jewish intolerance. The author undoubtedly wished to set forth a correct view of the true nature of prophecy. Many of the older prophecies had remained unfulfilled; and this author tried to show by the story of Nineveh's repentance at the preaching of Jonah that God's threats are always to be regarded as conditional. Moreover he wanted to reemphasize the idea, as old as Amos, that God's rule of the world is not limited to Palestine, but that it is universal. Jonah, commissioned to go to the farthest point east that the Jews ever heard of, started at once for the western limit of the Jewish world, Tartessus on the west coast of Spain, "to flee from the presence of the Lord." But Jonah learns the lesson which the lyric poet who wrote the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm had learned:

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?  
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

and, miraculously, Jonah is brought back to his duty, and to the realization that he cannot get away "from

the presence of the Lord." Incidentally the author reemphasizes also the teaching of the Book of Malachi about the sincerity and worth of heathen worship (Mal. I:11). The heathen throughout the book of Jonah are represented in a light far more favorable than the Jew. When the recreant prophet told the sailors his guilt, and advised them to throw him into the sea, their unwillingness to sacrifice his life is in marked contrast to his later indifference to the preservation of the lives of the repentant Ninevites. And again, the wholesale repentance of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah was in such sharp contrast to the response of the Hebrew people to the prophet's preaching that Jesus used it (Matt. XII:41) to shame the unrepentant cities of his day. Finally, this parable which we call the Book of Jonah teaches more effectively than any other Book of the Old Testament the truth of the divine fatherhood. As has been said before, it closes with a question which is meant to bring out a contrast between Jewish post-exilic intolerance and God's all-embracing pity. "Should not I have pity on Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (IV:11) "More simply," says Cornill, "the truth was never spoken in the Old Testament, that God, as creator of the whole earth, must also be the God and father of the entire world, in whose loving, kind, and fatherly heart all men are equal, before whom is no difference of nation and confession, but only men, whom he had created in his own image. Here Hosea and Jeremiah live anew. The unknown author of the Book of Jonah stretches forth his hand to these master hearts and intellects. In the celestial harmony of the infinite



Godly pity, the Israelitic prophecy rings out as the most costly bequest of Israel to the whole world." 67

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

- I. The attempted flight from the presence of the Lord, I.
- II. The prophet's prayer and deliverance, II.
- III. The prophet's preaching and the repentance of Nineveh, III.
- IV. The prophet's heartlessness in contrast to the wideness of God's mercy, IV

#### SUGGESTED READING ON JONAH

- Briggs, *The Study of Holy Scripture*, pp. 345-349.  
 Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 170-173.  
 Cornill, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, pp. 236-238.  
 Encyclopædia Biblica, II, columns 2566-2570.  
 Farrar, *Minor Prophets*, pp. 231-243.  
 McFadyen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 196 ff.  
 Orelli, *Twelve Minor Prophets*, pp. 167-184.  
 Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 73-74.  
 Smith, G. A., *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, II, pp. 493-513.

#### QUESTIONS ON JONAH

- What is the historical reference to Jonah? 2 Kings XIV:25?  
 What difference is apparent between this and other prophetic books?

<sup>67</sup> *Prophets of Israel*, p. 173.

What are the strongest reasons for considering the story unhistorical?

What seems to have been the purpose of the writer? Notice the resemblance between Jonah's attitude and that of Israel as represented in Is. XLII:24.

What can you say of Israel's previous familiarity with the symbolism the author uses? (Read in this connection Is. XXVI:21; XXVII:1; LI:9,10; Jer. LI:34,44.)

Had the parable been used earlier as a means of prophetic teaching? (Read Is. V:1-7.)

What later Jewish teacher used the parable extensively?

Point out a resemblance between the story of Jonah and the parable of the prodigal son.

Why has the book sometimes been called a satire?

What are its most important religious teachings?

## CHAPTER XXII

### DANIEL, THE DREAMER

THE background of the Book of Daniel is the stormy years of the Maccabees and of Antiochus Epiphanes. They were years of crisis. The Greek empire founded by Alexander the Great was divided at his death in 323 into four kingdoms—Macedonia, the Pergamenian kingdom of the Attalidæ, the Egyptian kingdom of the Ptolemies, and the Syrian kingdom of the Seleucidæ. To the latter, after about a century as a province of the Egyptian kingdom of the Ptolemies, Palestine was annexed in 198 B.C. In the year 175 Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) became king of Syria. He aimed at nothing less than the reduction to religious conformity of the different races of his heterogeneous kingdom. Of course this involved the complete eradication of Judaism.

Accordingly, in 168 B.C. he sent Apollonius with an army of twenty thousand men, who took possession of Jerusalem and attempted the forcible Hellenization of the Jewish people. All that was distinctively Jewish was prohibited, including Sabbath observance, circumcision, and the reading of the Law. Moreover, an altar to Zeus was set up in the Temple court. Of course the inevitable revolt took place. It occurred in 167. As a result of it, Judas Maccabæus performed the seemingly incredible feat of making Judah an independent state.

It was during this life-and-death struggle with Hellenism, probably in 164 B.C., that the Book of

Daniel was written with the purpose of sustaining the courage of the heroic revolvers against Greek tyranny by emphasizing the old prophetic faith in a divine Providence ruling in history, and the no less persistent confidence in the final victory of the cause of God. The Book is made up of two nearly equal portions. The first half (Chapters I—VI), mainly narrative in character, professes to relate the experiences of Daniel and his three companions in Babylon during the latter part of the Exile. It is written in the third person, and the author makes many errors in matters of fact relating to the fall of Babylon and the early Persian Empire. Such is the designation of Belshazzar as the Son of Nebuchadnezzar, and as the last king of Babylon, though he was neither the one nor the other; and the reference to "Darius the Mede," though history knows of no such person. These stories about Daniel, though probably based upon some historical foundation,<sup>68</sup> are quite evidently in the nature of historical fiction, bearing much the same relation to the Exile as Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* do to the time of Richard I of England.

It was their recognition that the first half of the Book of Daniel was historical fiction that led the Jewish scribes who arranged the order of the books in the Hebrew canon to place the whole Book of Daniel, not among the prophets, but in the third division of their Scriptures, just after the Book of Esther in the so-called "writings."<sup>69</sup> The Alexan-

<sup>68</sup> See Ezek. XIV: 14 and XXVIII: 3.

<sup>69</sup> The Jews classified their sacred books into three groups—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (*K'thubhim*). This arrangement represented quite accurately their estimate of the relative religious value of the different groups. The Law they regarded as most sacred of the three, and the Writings as least sacrosanct.

drian Jews who in the Third Century translated the Jewish Scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint), recognizing that the second half of the Book is made up of apocalyptic visions, preferred to regard the whole Book of Daniel as prophecy, and consequently placed it just after Ezekiel. This latter classification was followed by the makers of the Latin version (the Vulgate), and, consequently, by the later Christian translators.

The Jewish scribes were undoubtedly right in classifying the first six chapters of the Book of Daniel, with Esther and Ruth, as edifying fiction rather than as prophecy. They are stories, probably based on oral traditions, inaccurate historically, but admirably adapted to uphold Jewish fidelity to the law in the trying times of Hellenistic persecution. Each of the five stories is told to illustrate human and divine faithfulness.

a. How Daniel and his three companions were blessed because they were faithful to the Law (I-II).

b. How the three faithful Jews who refused to worship the golden image were unhurt by the fiery furnace (III).

c. How Nebuchadnezzar was punished for his pride (IV).

d. How Belshazzar was punished for his defiance of Yahveh by the loss of his kingdom (V).

e. How God preserved his faithful servant Daniel even in the lions' den (VI).

The second section of the book, Chapters VII—XII, is for the modern reader so bafflingly difficult to understand that Dr. Washington Gladden included it among the *Seven Puzzling Bible Books*. It is made up of a series of visions of world empires in their relation to the kingdom of God. The mold in which these visions are cast is that of apocalypse,

the peculiar literary form in which spiritual truths are impressed, not by direct appeal to heart and conscience, but by elaborate visions of the transcendental world, addressed to the imagination, and designed to be understood allegorically.

Of these visions there are five. The first is the vision of the four beasts representing the Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Greek Empires. The latter has ten horns, *i.e.*, ten successive kings. Finally a little horn, Antiochus Epiphanes, persecutes the saints till the "Ancient of Days" destroys it, and gives dominion over the earth to "one like unto a son of man," Israel, represented as human in contrast to the beasts, which stand for the Gentile Empires (VII).

The second vision is that of the ram and the he-goat. The ram with two horns, the Medo-Persian Empire, is overthrown by the he-goat, Alexander the Great, whose horn is in turn replaced by four horns, the four kingdoms into which at his death his empire was divided. From one of these, Syria, arises a little horn, Antiochus Epiphanes, which impiously exalted himself against God, and took away from him the continual burnt offering, and cast down the place of his sanctuary (VIII:11). The allegorical meaning of this vision is explained to the prophet by the Archangel Gabriel, who adds the comforting assurance that the little horn representing a king of fierce countenance (Antiochus), though he shall "prosper and do his pleasure" for a time, shall eventually be "broken without hand" (VIII).

There follows the vision of the Seventy Weeks, *i.e.*, years, in which Gabriel sets forth an interpretation of Judah's history from the capture of Jerusalem to the time of Antiochus, and points out that in the middle of the final week, he (Antiochus) "shall

cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," but that at the end of three and a half years Antiochus himself shall be destroyed by "one that maketh desolate," *i.e.*, God (IX).

The fourth vision is that of the man clothed in linen. It is the most obscure of all the visions, partly because persons and places are mostly described rather than named, partly because the vision is so elaborate and detailed, and partly because the author, in addition to representing an abstract of the history of the East from the time of "Darius, the Mede," ventures to predict the immediate future. He believed that Antiochus would make another campaign against Egypt in 164 B.C. and lose his life there. As a matter of fact Antiochus died in Persia and not in Egypt, though in the very year predicted (X-XI).

The last chapter narrates the vision of Israel's final conflict with evil. It is to be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," but with the help of the Archangel Michael "the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people" Israel shall be delivered, and the everlasting kingdom of righteousness established. There will be a partial resurrection of the dead both of the good and the bad. This passage is the most explicit statement in the Old Testament regarding a resurrection. It is, however, clearly evident that the resurrection is not yet regarded as either normal or universal. Only the pre-eminently righteous and wicked are raised to life, the former to glory, the latter to shame, while the great majority who are conspicuous neither for good nor evil are left in the limbo of Sheol.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that are wise shall shine



as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

XII: 2, 3.

Just what the effect of the Book of Daniel was upon the Jewish people in the desperate struggle with Hellenism we have no means of knowing. We know that the struggle was successful; and it is difficult not to believe that the successful issue of it was in no small measure due to this trumpet call to loyalty and trust. The book throbs with the writer's own unconquerable faith in the ultimate triumph of the good:

But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days.

XII: 13.

The quotation suggests the most striking feature of this amazing Book—the spirit of the author. In the time when the Temple was desolate, and an altar to Zeus stood where sacrifice had been offered to Yahveh, when every form of Yahveh-worship was forbidden by law, and every Jew who refused to offer heathen sacrifice was ruthlessly killed, the author of the Book of Daniel utters, without any trace of bitter malice toward the persecutors, his sublime faith that God rules through all the centuries and directs the course of empire, that in his own good time and in his own way He will deliver his people, and establish an everlasting kingdom of righteousness on the earth.

Whatever was the immediate effect of the Book, there is no question of its influence upon later Jewish thinking. It inspired the writing of a whole literature of extra-canonical apocalypses of which the most important are: the Book of Enoch, the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the

Assumption of Moses, Second-Esdras, the Book of Jubilees, the Sibylline Poems, and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. In each of these books, as in Daniel, the author places in the mouth of some ancient worthy a history of events up to his own time, followed by a description of God's judgment on the wicked, and the deliverance of his people.

Nor is the influence of Daniel upon Christian thought negligible. Much of the imagery of the Book of Revelation is borrowed from it. The Christian idea of the angelic hierarchy, with the four archangels, together with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, grew out of it. The designation of the Messiah as the Son of Man is first found in this book, and was later used in the gospel narratives.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

- I. Stories told in the third person to inspire and sustain Jewish courage in the conflict with the Greeks, I—VI.
  - A. How God rewarded fidelity to the law in the case of the Jewish captives, I—II.
  - B. How God delivered the three faithful ones from death when they refused to worship the golden image, III.
  - C. How God humbled the pride of Nebuchadnezzar, IV.
  - D. How Belshazzar was punished for sacrilege, and how Daniel was exalted, V.
  - E. How Daniel, condemned to death for his faithfulness to his religion, was delivered from the lions' den, VI.
- II. Visions described in the first person, VII—XII.

- A. The four beasts—the Babylonian, Median, Persian, and Greek Empires, VII.
- B. The ram and the he-goat—Alexander's overthrow of the Medo-Persian Empire, VIII.
- C. The Seventy Weeks—a retrospect of Judean history from 586 B.C. to the time of Antiochus IV, Epiphanes, IX.
- D. The man clothed in linen—a survey of world history from the time of "Darius, the Mede" to the revolt of the Maccabees (536 B.C.—167 B.C.), X-XI.
- E. The final deliverance through the help of Michael, "the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people," XII.

## SUGGESTED READING ON DANIEL

- Bennet and Adeney, *A Biblical Introduction*, pp. 224-233.
- Bewer, *Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 410-419.
- Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 173-179.
- Fowler, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel*, pp. 382-383.
- Gardiner, *The Bible as Literature*, pp. 257-262.
- Genung, *Guidebook to the Biblical Literature*, pp. 278-300.
- Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, pp. 338-346.
- Hodges, *How to Know the Bible*, pp. 164-167.
- Sanders, *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 74-76.
- Sanders, *History of the Hebrews*, pp. 292-293.
- Smith, J. M. P., *The Prophets and Their Times*, pp. 240-260.
- Wood and Grant, *The Bible as Literature*, pp. 213-219.

## QUESTIONS ON DANIEL

- Which seems to you the most impressive of the five stories contained in Chapter I—VI?
- Read in connection with Chapter V Byron's poem, "The Vision of Belshazzar."
- What seems to be the most notable characteristic of the author's spirit? (N.B. in this connection XI:45, which is spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes.)
- What is the date of the Book?
- What is the historical background?
- How would this help to account for the allegorical character of the Book?
- Explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat.
- What has been the reason for the continued misunderstanding of the Book?
- What of its influence upon later thought, both Jewish and Christian? Show that Daniel is a worthy successor of the great ethical teachers among the prophets.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PROPHETS AND MODERN IDEALS

THAT the ideals of Christendom are rapidly changing there can be no question. One after another the old theological dogmas, which we supposed were as deeply rooted and as unchangeable as the everlasting hills, are being discredited because they are no longer tenable by any living faith. Most emphatically is it true today that "from scheme and creed the light goes out." The light is going out of the ancient creeds, because the dominant idea that underlay them was the necessity for individual salvation, to be attained only through renunciation. The new ideals are social rather than individual. Whereas formerly the salvation of the individual soul for the future was the chief concern, today the salvation of society for the present is regarded as of the highest importance, and men are content to leave the salvation of their individual souls to the merciful decision of the "Judge of all the earth" believing that He "can not but do right."

Today the ascetic ideal no longer commands allegiance. Monastic vows, the hair shirt, flagellation, no longer serve as expressions of the piety of a generation that believes social justice in the present is a more desirable as well as a more attainable goal to strive for than future sainthood. In other words, to quote the statement of a prominent Christian writer of our day:

The goal toward which modern Christendom is striving is not the saved individual, nor the saved church, but a saved world.

And so our home missionaries in the south are to-day devoting themselves to the eradication of the cattle tick and the boll weevil as a means of laying a broad economic foundation for their evangelistic work that is to follow. And our foreign missionaries are teaching sanitation and personal hygiene as preliminary to work that was formerly regarded as exclusively their mission.

With such a change of emphasis, has come a corresponding change of watchwords. Instead of world renunciation, we hear much of world consecration as the phrase best adapted to express the ideals of an age that is coming to believe with the Second Isaiah that God's highest call is the call to service.

Now this change of emphasis and this consequent change of watchwords, though new in Christendom is not new in the world's best religious thought. It is certainly as old as Israel's prophets whose ideas are an integral part of our modern Christian thinking. Well has Emerson said of them:

The word unto the prophets spoken  
Was writ on tablets yet unbroken;  
The word by seers or sibyls told,  
In groves of oak or fanes of gold,  
Still floats upon the morning wind,  
Still whispers to the willing mind.<sup>70</sup>

The prophetic word was a demand for social righteousness. The prophets did not believe the world could be saved except through religion; but they unsparingly condemned those who failed to harmonize religion in its ceremonial aspects with religion in what may be called its social implications.

<sup>70</sup> "The Problem," st. 6.

Amos, the first of the "writing prophets," announced amid the revels of the feast at Bethel the impending fall of the Northern Kingdom; and declared that this would be the result, not of a lack of ceremonial godliness, but of social righteousness.

Thus said the Lord: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek.

The only hope of averting the ruin that Israel's social sin involves is, he insists, in the inauguration of a new era of social justice.

Seek good and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts shall be with you, as ye say. Hate the evil and love the good and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

The prophets who succeeded Amos were not less insistent than he had been upon the idea that social righteousness is the only thing that God cares about. They, like him, stressed in the religious life, not the creed and ceremonial, but righteous living, without which religion is as nothing. "I desire goodness and not sacrifice," said Hosea, and Jesus liked to quote the words. The Book of Isaiah begins with a contemptuous description of the means then in vogue with the ritualists of his day for averting God's wrath.

Wash you and make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Micah no less emphatically denies that God . . .



will be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil. He hath shown thee, O man, what is good, and what doth Yahveh require of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Jeremiah, also, regarded the social duties of man as of supreme religious importance. Most emphatic is his assertion that social justice is of more account than temple worship.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words saying the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore.

Following the example of the earlier prophets, Ezekiel the priest-prophet of the Exile, whom we should expect to be less radical than his predecessors, indicated not less clearly than they had done the social importance of religion, and insists no less strenuously upon social ethics in these words:

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right . . . neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbor's wife . . . and hath not wronged any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true justice between man and man, hath walked in my statutes and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord of hosts.

The preaching of the prophets never varied in its

insistence that religion is in the first place a matter between man and his Maker, then a matter between man and society; that it must inspire men to act justly toward others, and that no people can be called religious that does not demand justice for itself and do justly to others. Even the last of them, those like Malachi, who preached when the Jewish religion had become a book religion, and Judaism had narrowed into a church, when even the prophets had become zealous for the Law, for the Temple, and its ritual, were by no means blind to the fact that the national church, with its intolerance and its disregard for social justice, could not claim the favor of a holy God, who always regarded the inward and spiritual above the outward and visible. Malachi denounces ecclesiasticism and formal observance of a ceremonial cult, assuring his people that God will be a . . .

witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers; and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

Indeed, there is no reason to question the justness of Prof. George Adam Smith's assertion regarding the teaching of the prophets:

The student of the prophets, as he realizes their equal insistence . . . upon the religious and economic rights of every common citizen and upon the substitution, for confidence in ritual, of the ethical service of men, must recognize principles of which all social philosophies and systems since constructed present only the fragments and details.

As the earliest exponents of the fundamental truth that religion and ethics are inseparable, that the chief concern of religion is development of character, the equitable adjustment of human relationships, and

the conquest of poverty and vice, and that these concerns are prerequisite to a realization of the long-deferred hope of the kingdom of righteousness on the earth, the prophets made a vital contribution to the most important problem of our day.

Our aims are identical with theirs. We also long for a time when righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. To us in this day, confused in our ideas of what religion really is, and groping blindly for a method of hastening the coming of a better day for humanity, the message of the prophets comes with clarifying power affirming that religion is to "seek justice, and relieve the oppressed," and that until we make society religious in this sense we shall not realize our ancient hope of the kingdom of God on earth which these men promised.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF HEBREW HISTORY TO THE TIME OF THE MACCABEES

| PALESTINE  |  | EGYPT   | BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Before the Christian Era   |  |   | 2100 Hammurabi<br>King of Babylon<br>(Code of Edicts discovered 1902 A.D.) |
| Early Hebrew Settlements in Canaan   |  | 1700-1580 The Hyksos Rule<br>1550 Amenhotep's campaign in Palestine<br>1530 Thutmose I. in Palestine<br>1459 Thutmose III. Conquest of Palestine<br>1375-1358 Amenhotep IV.<br>1313-1292 Seti I.<br>1292-1225 Rameses II.<br>1225-1215 Menepthah<br>1220 The Exodus |  |
| Conquest of Canaan under Joshua  |  | 1198-1167 Rameses III.  |  |
| 1150 Deborah, battle of Kishon<br>The Period of the Judges<br>1100 Gideon<br>Abimelech<br>1100-1020 Samuel<br>1028-1013 Saul<br>1013 Battle of Gilboa<br>1013-1006 David King of Judah<br>1006-973 David King of all Israel<br>973-933 Solomon |  | 947-925 Shishak   |  |
| Judah  | Israel   |   |  |
| 933-917 Rehoboam   | 933-912 Jeroboam I   |   |  |
| 917-915 Abijah   |  |   |  |
| 915-875 Asa  | 912-911 Nadab<br>911-888 Baasa<br>888-887 Elah<br>887-876 Omri<br>876-853 Ahab<br>853-842 Elijah |   |  |

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF HEBREW HISTORY TO THE TIME  
OF THE MACCABEES

| PALESTINE                      |  | EGYPT | BABYLONIA AND<br>ASSYRIA   |
|--------------------------------|--|-------|--|
| Judah                          | Israel   |       |  |
| 875-851 Je-<br>hoshaphat       | 853 Battle of<br>Ramoth in<br>Gilead<br>853-852<br>Ahaziah<br>852-843<br>Jehoram |       | 860-825 Shalmaneser<br>III.<br>854 Battle of Karkar  |
| 851-844<br>Jehoram             |  |       |  |
| 844-843<br>Ahaziah             |  |       |  |
| 843-837<br>Athaliah            | 843-816 Jehu<br>Elisha   |       | 842 Jehu pays tribute<br>to Shalmaneser<br>839 Assyrian campaign<br>against Damascus<br>810-783 Adadnirari IV. |
| 837-798<br>Jehoash             | 816-800<br>Jehoahaz<br>800-785<br>Jehoash  |       |  |
| 798-780<br>Amaziah             |  |       |  |
|                                | 785-745 Jero-<br>boam II.<br>Amos, Hosea   |       |  |
| 780-740<br>Azariah<br>(Uzziah) |  |       |  |
|                                | 744<br>Zechariah<br>Shallum<br>744-737<br>Menahem<br>737-736<br>Pekahiah         |       | 772-755 Ashurdan III.<br>755-746 Ashurnirari<br>IV.<br>745-727 Tiglathpileser<br>IV.                           |
| 740-736 Joth-<br>am            |  |       |  |
| 736 Syro-Ep                    | raimitic War   |       |  |

| PALESTINE                              |                                       | EGYPT                 | BABYLONIA AND ASSYRIA                 | SYRIA (ARAM)                           | MEDIA        | PERSIA |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------|--------|
| Judah                                  | Israel                                |                       |                                       |  |              |        |
| 735-720 Ahaz<br>Isaiah                 | 733-722 Hoshea<br>722 Fall of Samaria |                       | 729 Accession of Tiglathpileser (Pul) | 740 Rezin King at Damascus             |              |        |
| 720-692 Hezekiah<br>Micah              | Disappearance of the Ten Tribes       |                       | 727-722 Shalmaneser V.                | 733 Damascus captured by the Assyrians |              |        |
| 701 Jerusalem Destroyed                |                                       | 671 Fall of Memphis   | 722-705 Sargon                        |  |              |        |
| 692-638 Manasseh                       |                                       | 666 Fall of Thebes    | 705-681 Sennacherib                   |  |              |        |
|  |                                       | 664-609 Psammetich I. | 681-669 Esarhaddon                    |  |              |        |
| 638 Amon                               |                                       |                       | 668-626 Ashurbanipal                  |  |              |        |
| 638-609 Josiah                         |                                       |                       |                                       |  | 624 Cyaxares |        |
| 638-609 Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah     |                                       |                       | 625-605 Nabopolassar                  |  |              |        |
| 630 The Scythians                      |                                       |                       |                                       |  |              |        |
| 621 Discovery of the Law (Deuteronomy) | invasion of Western Asia              |                       | 612 Fall of Nineveh                   |  |              |        |
| 609, Death of Josiah at Megiddo        |                                       | 609-593 Necho II.     | 605 Battle of Carchemish              |  |              |        |
| 609 Jehoahaz                           |                                       |                       | 605-562 Nebuchadnezzar                |  |              |        |
| 608-598 Jehoiakim                      |                                       |                       |                                       |  |              |        |
| 598 Jehoiachin                         |                                       |                       |                                       |  |              |        |

| PALESTINE   |        | EGYPT                                    | BABYLONIA AND<br>ASSYRIA   | SYRIA (ARAM) | MEDIA | PERSIA  |
|---|--------|--|--|--------------|-------|---|
| Judah   | Israel |  |  |              |       |   |
| Ezekiel<br>597 First deportation<br>597-587 Zedekiah              |        | 594-588 Psammetich II.<br>588-569 Hophra | Ezekiel<br>555-538 Nabonidus<br>Deutero-Isaiah<br>539 Babylon captured by Cyrus<br>525 Conquest of Egypt by Cambyses |              |       | 546-530<br>Cyrus<br>530-522<br>Cambyses<br>521-485<br>Darius I. |
| 586 Jerusalem destroyed<br>Gedaliah                               |        |  |  |              |       |   |
| 538 First return from captivity                                   |        |  |  |              |       |   |
| 520 Zerubbabel<br>Haggai, Zechariah<br>1-8<br>516 Temple finished |        |  |  |              |       |   |



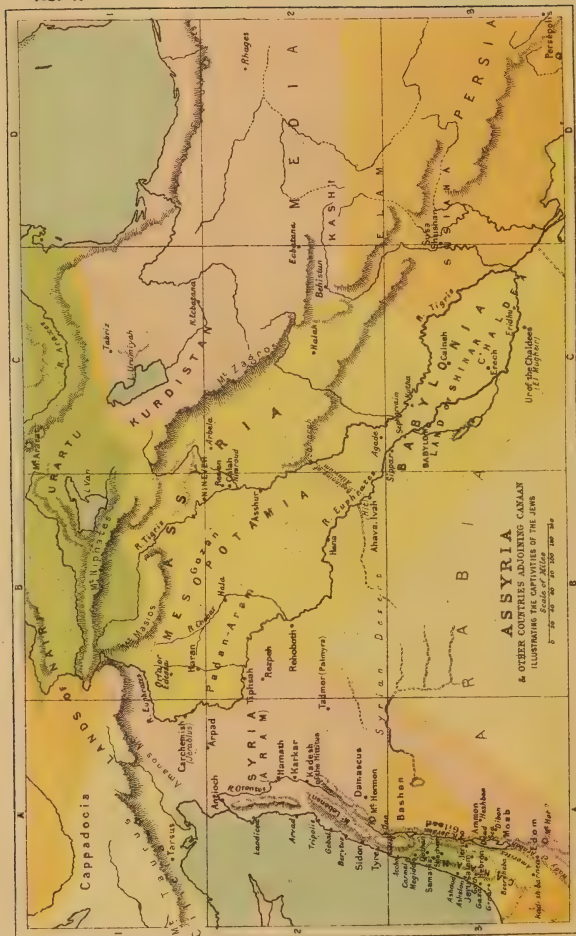
| PALESTINE  | EGYPT  | BABYLONIA<br>AND ASSYRIA | MEDIA | PERSIA   |
|--|--|--------------------------|-------|--|
| <p>458 Second Return led by Ezra</p> <p>457 Mixed marriages dissolved</p> <p>445 Nehemiah governor of Judea</p> <p>Ezra reads the law</p> <p>Obadiah, Malachi, Isaiah 56-66</p> <p>433 Nehemiah recalled</p> | <p>411-410 Destruction of Jewish temple at Elephantine</p> <p>404 Amyrtæus</p> |                          |       | <p>485-480 Xerxes Campaign of Xerxes in Greece</p> <p>Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis</p> <p>465-425 Artaxerxes</p> <p>424-404 Darius II.</p> <p>404-361 Artaxerxes II.</p> <p>361-337 Artaxerxes III.</p> <p>335-331 Darius III.</p> |

| PALESTINE   | GREECE  | EGYPT (PTOLEMIES)   | SYRIA (SELEUCIDS)   | PARTHIA                       |
|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <p>Joel<br/>Isaiah 24-27<br/>Zechariah 9-14<br/>Jonah</p> <p>331 Alexander passes through Palestine</p> <p>320 Ptolemy captures Jerusalem</p> <p>315 Palestine made a Syrian province</p> <p>312 Palestine retaken by Ptolemy</p> | <p>334 Alexander the Great crosses the Hellespont</p> <p>333 Battle of Issus</p> <p>332 Fall of Tyre and Gaza</p> <p>323 Death of Alexander</p> | <p>305-285 Ptolemy I. Soter</p> <p>301 Battle of Ipsus</p> <p>Ptolemy seizes Palestine</p> <p>285-247 Ptolemy II. Philadelphus</p> <p>250 Greek version of Old Testament (Septuagint) begun</p> <p>247-222 Ptolemy III. Evergetes</p> <p>222-205 Ptolemy IV. Philopator</p> <p>181-146 Ptolemy VI. Philometor</p> | <p>305-280 Seleucus I.</p> <p>280-261 Antiochus I.</p> <p>261-247 Antiochus II.</p> <p>249 Antiochus II. receives the rights to Palestine</p> <p>222-187 Antiochus III.</p> <p>187-176 Seleucus IV.</p> <p>175-164 Antiochus IV. Epiphanes</p> <p>169 First Egyptian campaign</p> <p>168 Second Egyptian campaign</p> | <p>170-138 Mithradates I.</p> |
| <p>198 Palestine again a Syrian province</p> <p>168 Jerusalem reduced by Antiochus IV.</p> <p>Practice of Judaism forbidden</p> <p>Revolt of the Maccabees</p> <p>Daniel</p>  |   |   |   |                               |











# PALESTINE

FROM THE RAISED MAP  
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BY GEORGE ARMSTRONG ESQ.  
Secretary to the Fund.

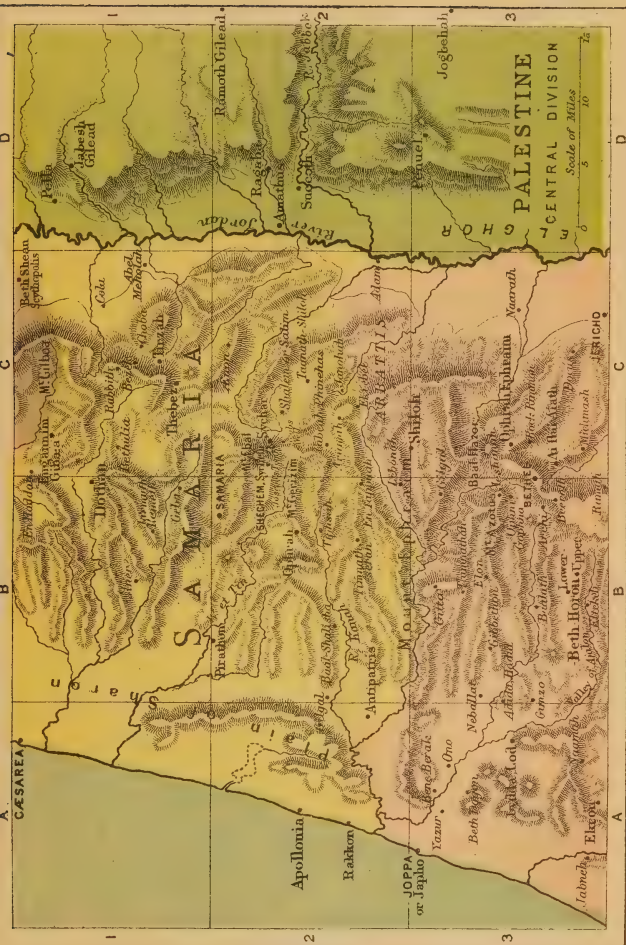
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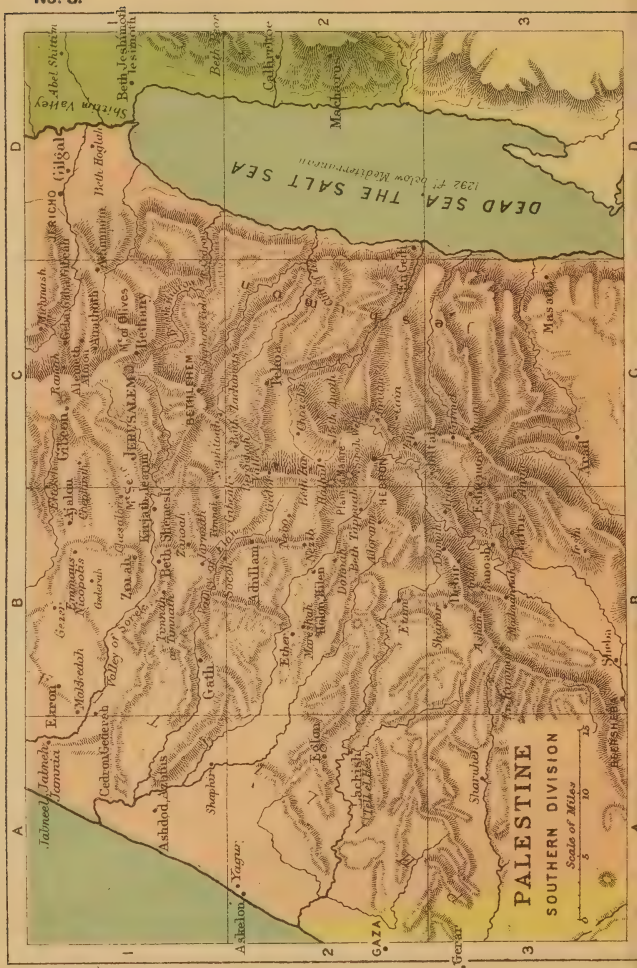
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